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Hegel's
Conception
of the
Determinate
Negation

Terje Sparby

Hegel's Conception of the Determinate Negation

Critical Studies in German Idealism

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By

Terje Sparby



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sparby, Terje

Hegel's conception of the determinate negation / by Terje Sparby.

pages cm. -- (Critical studies in German idealism : ISSN 1878-9986 ; VOLUME 12)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-28460-9 (hardback : alk. paper) -- ISBN 978-90-04-28461-6 (e-book)

1. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770-1831. 2. Logic. 3. Negation (Logic) I. Title.

B2949.L8S63 2014

160--dc23

2014033057

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities.
For more information, please see <http://www.brill.com/brill-typeface>.

ISSN 1878-9986

ISBN 978-90-04-28460-9 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-28461-6 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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Abbreviations

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Enz.	<i>Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse</i> (1830)
KrV	<i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i>
KpV	<i>Kritik der praktischen Vernunft</i>
KU	<i>Kritik der Urteilstkraft</i>
PG	<i>Phänomenologie des Geistes</i>
SII	<i>Systementwürfe II</i>
WdL	<i>Wissenschaft der Logik</i>
WL	<i>Wissenschaftslehre</i>

Collected Works

AA	Kant, I. (1968): <i>Kants Werke. Akademie Textausgabe</i> . Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. Format: Vol.: Page or paragraph numer.
FGW	Fichte, J.G.: (1962ff.) <i>Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> . Format: Section/Vol.: Page.
FSW	Fichte, J.G. (1834–35): <i>Johann Gottlieb Fichte's sämtliche Werke</i> . Berlin: Veit. Format: Section/Vol.: Page.
GW	Hegel, G.W.F. (1968ff.): <i>Gesammelte Werke</i> . Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag. Format: Vol.: Page.
TWA	Hegel, G.W.F. (1970): <i>Theorie-Werksausgabe, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp</i> . Format: Vol.: Page.
SSW	Schelling, F.W.J. (1856–61): <i>Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schellings sämtliche Werke</i> , I Section Vols. 1–14, Stuttgart: Cotta. Format: Vol.: Page.
V	Hegel, G.W.F. (1983–2007): <i>Vorelsungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte</i> . Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag. Format: Vol.: Page.

References

References to Hegel's *Enz.* are given in the following way: First the volume and page number of TWA is stated, then the paragraph-equivalent of GW and TWA. In instances where the reference can only be found in the TWA *Zusätze*, this is marked by the paragraph number plus "Z" (and the number of the comment when there is more than one comment to the paragraph in question). The references to WdL and PhG use the wording of TWA. The references to Kant's so-called *Jäsche-Logik* is given either as a paragraph number or the page reference of the first edition from 1800 (which is also stated in the Suhrkamp-edition, Kant, I.: *Schriften zur Metaphysik und Logik*, 2, Suhrkamp: Frankfurt am Main, 1977). The references to Fichte's works are primarily given through FSW, with the exception of his letters, which are given through FGW.

Terminology

In my treatment of WdL I have adopted the terminology established by A.V. Miller (*Hegel's Science of Logic*, London: George Allen and Unwin 1969). I indicate which German word is referred to in parenthesis if the translation is not obvious, or if it can be helpful to bring the German word to mind.

Introduction

It may seem odd to dedicate a whole study of Hegel's philosophy to a single subordinate form of his concept of negation. It is well known that "negation" is an important concept in Hegel's philosophy, and this concept has been studied extensively;¹ only recently has the term "determinate negation" begun to draw specific attention, in particular through the work of Robert Brandom.² Notably, the determinate negation is not at all mentioned in Dieter Henrich's influential article "Hegels Grundoperation."³ However, as I will argue, the idea that a negation can be determinate, and, furthermore, that a determinate negation can establish a speculative unity of opposites, is perhaps the singularly most distinctive – and least understood – characteristics of Hegel's thinking.⁴

Through focusing on the determinate negation I will also develop an interpretation of the thinking that underlies his philosophy. This is due to the fact that one cannot make sense of the determinate negation without understanding it within the context of the dialectical method, which again requires a treatment of Hegel's logic. And the logic is fundamental to the whole of Hegel's thought.

In the following I will first outline the *problem* of the determinate negation, which consists of not only different and inconsistent ways in which this term has been treated in the secondary literature, but also that Hegel himself is quite inconsistent in the way he uses the term throughout his work. I then

1 Henrich, Dieter: "Hegels Grundoperation." in: *Der Idealismus und seine Gegenwart*, U. Guzzoni, B. Rang, L. Siep (eds.), Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1979, pp. 208–230. Bonsiepen, Wolfgang: *Der Begriff der Negativität in den Jenaer Schriften Hegels*. Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1977. Koch, Anton Friedrich: "Die Selbstbeziehung der Negation in Hegels Logik." in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 53(1), 1999, 1–29. Brauer, Daniel: "Die dialektische Natur der Vernunft. Über Hegels Auffassung von Negation und Widerspruch." in: *Hegel-Studien* 30, 1995, pp. 89–104. Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerpruchs. Eine Studie zur Dialektik Kants und Hegels*. Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010.

2 References are provided in 1.1.1.

3 Henrich, Dieter: "Hegels Grundoperation," in: *Der Idealismus und seine Gegenwart*. Ute Guzzoni, Bernhard Rang, Ludwig Siep (eds.), Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1979, pp. 208–230.

4 And it could be argued that this is not only an important contribution not only to western philosophy, but also to the global intellectual development of humanity. Cf. Utz, Konrad: *Philosophie des Zufalls*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005, p. 51 (discussed in footnote 498).

suggest what I believe is the root of this problem, which has to do with the relationship between speculation and understanding. This sets the stage for the rest of my inquiry. However, before delving fully into it, I will provide an overview of the main lines of thought that I will investigate.

1.1 The Problem

The state of research on Hegel's conception of the determinate negation presents us with a specific problem. The different interpretations of the determinate negation are inconsistent. As I will show, some interpretations emphasize that the determinate negation concerns the exclusion of opposites, while others emphasize inclusion and even indicate that the determinate negation is a *unity of opposites*. This is not only due to the different approaches of the different interpreters of Hegel's philosophy, but also that Hegel himself is not consistent in his use of the term. Furthermore, this seems to be a reflection of what is perhaps a deep inconsistency inherent in Hegel's thinking. The main problem of this study is to attempt to sort this out and offer a consistent and comprehensive interpretation of the term "determinate negation" in Hegel's philosophy.

In the following, I will first give examples of inconsistent interpretations, then indicate how Hegel's use of the term is itself inconsistent, and finally give an outline of what I believe is the deeper inconsistency inherent in Hegel's thinking, which is in part the root of the problem of the inconsistent interpretations.

The presentation of the determinate negation as "material incompatibility" will be somewhat elaborate, since I also present an overview of Brandom's interpretation of Hegel. This presentation serves the function of establishing an initial critical perspective, and throughout this study I will develop this perspective into an alternative interpretation that I believe is more sensitive to Hegel's speculative and dialectical thinking than Brandom's.

1.1.1 *The Determinate Negation as Exclusion or "Material Incompatibility"*

The widely discussed philosophical pragmatism of Robert Brandom is characteristic in that it represents a recent attempt at using elements of Hegel's philosophy constructively within a contemporary philosophical discourse. One of these elements is the determinate negation, which Brandom calls Hegel's most fundamental conceptual tool,⁵ or "his most fundamental

5 Brandom, Robert: "Idealism and Holism in Hegel's Phenomenology." in: *Hegel-Studien*, 36, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, p. 64.

semantic-cum-metaphysical concept.”⁶ A similar evaluation of the determinate negation is also common within the Hegel scholarship.⁷ However, as it will become clear in the following, Brandom’s account of the determinate negation is problematic, in that he treats it solely as a relation of exclusion, while consciously leaving out the positive aspect of the determinate negation, which is easily recognizable in Hegel’s writings. This puts him at odds with the main tendency within the scholarship, where the focus has been how to understand this positive aspect, trying to differentiate the determinate negation from a negation that is not simply a denial, but has a positive content of its own, and somehow includes that which is negated. Still, Brandom’s account is helpful when it comes to developing a comprehensive understanding of the determinate negation, which cannot leave out the fact that although it may have some positive content, it is also a negation, and therefore, in one sense or another, implies exclusion.

Brandom’s use of the term “determinate negation” is deeply embedded in his program of a pragmatic account of the content of concepts. Brandom understands conceptual activity as a form of non-representational expressivism, which is not concerned with how the inner life of the human being is expressed in the outer world, as in traditional expressivism, but rather with how what is implicit in human practices is made explicit through a process of conceptualization. Making explicit what is implicit in a practice – for instance distinguishing *red* – means gaining an understanding of how what we are claiming plays a role within inferential structures. The pragmatic stance is that *everything* we say, think, believe, i.e. *all* our propositional attitudes, originally come from something we *do*. Giving an account of abstract, conceptual laws such as the law of non-contradiction, depends on a prior practice of distinguishing something from something else, in which the incompatibility expressed by the law non-contradiction is only implicit. Brandom draws on Kant in that he understands concepts as *norms* that we commit ourselves to, but widens the horizon to include a Hegelian framework of recognition,

6 Brandom, Robert: “Some Hegelian Ideas of Note for Contemporary Analytic Philosophy.” in: *Hegel Bulletin* 35(1), 2014, p. 11.

7 In general, most would regard the dialectical method of Hegel to be the central core of his philosophy and agree with the claim that the determinate negation is the one of the most, if not *the* most, important operator within the method, in particular when it comes to its immanent necessity. See 1.1.2 for references. Furthermore, Brandom is not alone in focusing on the determinate negation as consisting of a relation of exclusion. See chapter 3 in Redding, Paul: *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

defined by a practice of holding each other and ourselves accountable for our commitments – an approach that can be summed up with the claim: *all transcendental constitution is social institution*.⁸ This, and Brandom's anti-platonic sympathies, makes his reading of Hegel deflationist; Brandom argues against a strong metaphysical identification of thought and being, but still claims that a Hegelian form of objective idealism is compatible with his pragmatism. How successful this is, is a matter of debate.⁹ More defining, perhaps, is Brandom's rejection of Hegel's account of the nature of logical and empirical concepts.¹⁰ It is on this point that it becomes clear exactly how Brandom only takes up certain elements from Hegel's philosophy while actually rejecting most of it, in particular Hegel's attempt at a critical reform and further development of logic and metaphysics, as expressed through *The Science of Logic*.

According to Brandom, Hegel's account of empirical and logical concepts can be summed up with four points:

- (1) Empirical concepts are *provisional, unstable* and *expressively open*.
- (2) There is a set of logical concepts that is *final, stable* and *expressively closed*.
- (3) Empirical concepts are to be understood by "a rational reconstruction of a history of their *development*."¹¹
- (4) Logical concepts are to be understood by a rational reconstruction of a history of their development.

Brandom disagrees with the second and fourth point. He suggests that it is impossible to "finish the task of producing expressive tools to make explicit what is implicit in the process of determining empirical content" and he is not convinced that Hegel has "already given us a complete set of inference-codifying concepts," something that becomes evident if one takes the development

8 Brandom, Robert B.: *Articulating Reasons*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 34.

9 For a mainly positive presentation, see Pippin, Robert: "Brandom's Hegel," in: *German Idealism*, Routledge: London, 2007, pp. 153–180. For a different opinion, see Houlgate, Stephen: "Hegel and Brandom," in: *German Idealism. Contemporary Perspectives*, Hammer, Espen (ed.), London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 137–152.

10 See Brandom, Robert B.: "Sketch of a Program for a Critical Reading of Hegel. Comparing Empirical and Logical Concepts," in: *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus*, 3, 2005, pp. 131–161.

11 Ibid., p. 159.

of logic after Hegel into consideration.¹² Furthermore, Brandom shares the view that empirical concepts must be understood in their development, but thinks that this is *not* the case for logical concepts. Consequently, *The Science of Logic* plays an insignificant role in Brandom's reading of Hegel.

This characteristic disregard of *The Science of Logic* may help to explain why Brandom's interpretation is often met with critique. For instance, it has been pointed out that Brandom's pragmatic account of empirical concepts "is alien to Hegel's logical-metaphysical theory of conceptuality,"¹³ that he misunderstands Hegel's concept of history as well as of society and therefore his idea of rationality,¹⁴ that he remains within the sphere of *Verstand* while disregarding *Vernunft*,¹⁵ that his understanding of recognition in Hegel is flawed,¹⁶ and, finally, that Hegel, as an a priori rationalist metaphysician, cannot possibly believe that "transcendental constitution is social institution."¹⁷ Although positive appreciation and elaboration can be found,¹⁸ the claim that Brandom's use of Hegel is "largely symbolic"¹⁹ does not seem to be groundless.

-
- 12 Brandom points out that Hegel only had access to term logic, which we now know cannot handle certain inferences that modern predicate logic can. Brandom also points to the variety of conditionals that are available in contemporary logics, all of which have opened up previously unknown avenues of inferential explication. See Brandom: Robert B.: "Sketch of a Program for a Critical Reading of Hegel. Comparing Empirical and Logical Concepts." in: *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus*, 3, 2005, pp. 159f.
 - 13 De Laurentiis, Allegra: "Not Hegel's tales," in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 3(1), 2007, pp. 83.
 - 14 Nuzzo, Angelica: "Life and death in the history of philosophy," in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 3(1), 2007, pp. 35–53.
 - 15 De Laurentiis, Allegra: "Not Hegel's tales," in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 3(1), 2007, pp. 83–98.
 - 16 Westphal, Kenneth: *Hegel's Epistemology*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003, p. 62. This point is also made by De Laurentiis, Allegra: "Not Hegel's tales," in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 3(1), 2007, pp. 83–98.
 - 17 See Houlgate, Stephen: "Hegel and Brandom," in: *German Idealism. Contemporary Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 137–152.
 - 18 Pippin, Robert: "Brandom's Hegel," in: *German Idealism. Contemporary Perspectives*, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 153–180.
 - 19 Westphal, Kenneth: *Hegel's Epistemology*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003, p. 65. Westphal also has the following to say about Brandom's account of the determinate negation: "Brandom [in the paper 'Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel's Idealism', in: *European Journal of Philosophy*, 7(2), 1999, pp. 164–189] recognizes the centrality of contrastive differentiation to Hegel's account of the determinate content of conceptions and judgments but wrongly labels this with Hegel's term 'determinate negation'. Instead, Hegel's 'determinate negation' concerns the role that internal criticism of alternate views plays in the justification

It is tempting to claim the same for Brandom's account of the determinate negation; although Brandom points out one important aspect of the determinate negation, his focus on its exclusive nature shows a characteristic lack of dialectical sensibility. True enough, both Hegel and Brandom are interested in the resolution of contradictions, but Brandom is nowhere near Hegel in "tarrying with the negative," in letting despair and confusion show forth before any resolution comes into question.

Disregarding *The Science of Logic*, Brandom's account of the determinate negation is based on a reading of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The main question is how empirical concepts are determined within a framework of conceptual holism. Brandom understands determination as a matter of *identity* and *individuation*, of drawing a distinction between something and other. A determination gives either *mere difference* or *material incompatibility*. Something that is merely different, such as red and square, are, although different, still combinable. Something that is materially incompatible, such as square and circle, *cannot* be combined, but rather negate (exclude) each other. Material incompatibility is made explicit through being codified in the law of non-contradiction, which, notably, Brandom thinks Hegel not only fully accepts, but also places at "the very center of his thought."²⁰ Furthermore, Brandom *identifies* material incompatibility with Hegel's conception of the determinate negation.²¹ This conception is essentially characterized by the modally robust consequence relations it entails – p entails q , when everything that is excluded by q is necessarily also excluded by p .²²

of a philosophical theory [...]." Westphal is certainly right that the determinate negation has to do with internal criticism but this is only one example of the application of the conception of the determinate negation within a specific philosophical context. This also goes for Brandom's reference to the determinate negation in relation to the content of concepts. However, both Brandom and Westphal focus on the determinate negation in relation to PhG and not in WdL. It is only with the presentation of the determinate negation in WdL – and the further treatment of its conceptual aspects through WdL – that the general structure of the conception of the determinate negation becomes clear. As I will argue later on, the determinate negation indeed has, as Brandom claims, a contrastive significance, but not really in the way Brandom thinks.

20 Brandom, Robert: "Idealism and Holism in Hegel's Phenomenology," in: *Hegel-Studien*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, p. 63.

21 Ibid., p. 64f.

22 Brandom's example is that being square entails being polygonal, since everything that is excluded by being square is excluded by being polygonal. This seems strange since not only does it not follow the order that Brandom has just specified, but it is also obvious that

This would be enough to show how one-sided Brandom's understanding of the determinate negation is, but it becomes exceedingly clear in his exposition of Hegel's method, or what Brandom calls "traversing the moments."²³ It starts out Hegelian enough, with an identification of three moments in the process of determination. However, how these moments are described is problematic. First (A) a property is determined immediately and apart from its relations to other determinations, then (B) it is determined which properties are incompatible with it, and finally (C) the identity of "the determinate content of the property" is understood as "essentially consisting in its relations of exclusion of or difference from those it contrasts with" – something is properly determined when we understand the full range of what it excludes.²⁴

What is striking here, is that all moments seem to remain within the sphere of *Verstand*. Where is the negative reason, the dialectics of the second moment, and where is the speculation of the third? Any exclusion that the understanding sees as essential to a determination would be shown by dialectics to imply the transformation of an original determination into its opposite, implying an essential relation to, and possibly *inclusion* of, the opposite. In a Hegelian account this would be understood as giving rise to a contradiction, which is then (at least partially) resolved by speculation. Not through giving a list of what a determination excludes and includes, but rather through a new

everything excluded by being square is not excluded by being polygonal (for instance, *being square* excludes *having five angles*, but *having five angles* is not excluded by *being polygonal*). It has already been pointed out by de Laurentiis that Brandom's example seems to contain an oversight; it is not consistent with the order that Brandom specifies and what he seems to want to say is "if non-q entails non-p, then p entails q," not "if non-p entails non-q, then p entails q." Furthermore, de Laurentiis points out that polygonal and circle are not necessarily incompatible for Hegel, at least not from the point of view of *reason*, which she takes as an example of how Brandom only moves within the sphere of *Verstand* in his appropriation of Hegel. See de Laurentiis, Allegra: "Not Hegel's tales," in: *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 3(1), 2007, p. 89 and 97. That Brandom's example contains an error is confirmed if one looks at footnote 8 on p. 12 of the manuscript for *Hegel and Analytic Philosophy*: "For *p* entails *q* (*Pa* entails *Qa*) in a modally strong sense in case everything incompatible with *q* is incompatible with *p*. Thus 'Pedro is a donkey' entails 'Pedro is a mammal', because everything incompatible with being a mammal is incompatible with being a donkey (but not *vice versa*)."

23 Brandom, Robert: "Idealism and Holism in Hegel's Phenomenology," in: *Hegel-Studien*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, pp. 87ff.

24 And, as Brandom notes, also of what is included in it, although this must not be understood as "dialectical inclusion" in the sense that something contains its other. See Brandom, Robert: "Idealism and Holism in Hegel's Phenomenology," in: *Hegel-Studien*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, p. 91.

determination that is a unity of the original determination with its previously excluded opposite determination. There is, however, evidence that Brandom is aware of the significance of dialectics in Hegel, but he seems intent on disregarding it. “Being for another” is, for Brandom, “in the case that matters, relations of strong exclusion,”²⁵ and he states “Hegel sometimes – I think, less happily – talks about the situation in which one posits, say, properties now as immediate and again as mediated, as one in which the same content (a determinate property) shows up in two different forms.”²⁶

Somewhat contrary to this, Brandom points out that there is at least one sense in which determinate negations can lead to positive results.²⁷ If all concepts are seen to be in some sense dialectically unstable or contradictory, the result may become a strong semantic pessimism, which again leads to epistemological skepticism, something Hegel obviously wants to avoid (even if he seeks to include certain lessons from skepticism). The positive function of the determinate negation can be understood as that which overcomes the dialectical confusion. But this will not help us, Brandom notes, if the positive result leads to further “materially incompatible commitments,” i.e. new contradictions. Indeed, Brandom believes that Hegel endorses a form of strong semantic pessimism, but only as half of the story, that in “one sense, all of our determinate judgments are false, and all of our actions are failures. But in another sense, all those judgments are true and all those actions successful. To understand Hegel’s concept of determinateness requires understanding the relations between the two perspectives” – however, this is, we are told, “another story.”²⁸ And, we could add, it is certainly not Brandom’s story. Brandom’s story – in particular, his reading of Hegel – depends on the notion of determinate negation as a relation of mutual exclusion. It is this fact that makes Brandom’s doctrine of determination distinctly Brandomian and not Hegelian (although perhaps Kantian in a way Brandom seems to be unaware of, in that for Kant determination is a matter of positing a predicate such that its opposite is excluded – see 2.1.1). Still, as I have yet to argue, I believe that the determinate

25 Brandom, Robert: “Idealism and Holism in Hegel’s Phenomenology.” in: *Hegel-Studien*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, p. 88.

26 Ibid., p. 88.

27 Brandom: Robert B.: “Sketch of a Program for a Critical Reading of Hegel. Comparing Empirical and Logical Concepts.” in: *Internationales Jahrbuch des Deutschen Idealismus*, Vol. 3, 2005, p. 148.

28 Ibid., p. 148.

negation – as the unity of opposites – must also be understood as a form of exclusion if it is going to have the positive, methodical function that Hegel ascribes to it. In this way Brandom's reading of Hegel serves as a reminder for any reading that puts the focus too strongly on the positive, opposition-including and totalizing aspect of Hegel's philosophy. In addition, Brandom has pointed out a worry that seems valid, namely that of the threat of strong semantic pessimism, something that has to be answered by telling a properly speculative story and giving an account of how Hegel understands the relation of truth and falsity. However, I believe this is a story that cannot be told in full clarity until all the aspects of Hegel's conception of the determinate negation are fully accounted for. This is an issue we will return to on more occasions.

1.1.2 *The Determinate Negation as Inclusion*

The most common way of interpreting the determinate negation is defined by considering it in relation to the dialectical method of *The Science of Logic*.²⁹ I will not go into a long exposition of the varieties of the inclusive view in the same level of detail as I did with Brandom's view, in part for the sake of brevity, but also because I will develop this view out of Hegel's own presentation of the determinate negation in *The Science of Logic*.

Here is an overview of the landscape: The consensus is that the determinate negation plays an important role when it comes to establishing the immanent and necessary progress in the development of the determinations of pure thought.³⁰ There are, however, differing views on how it is to be understood in itself. Common to most interpretations is an attempt at giving an account of how the determinate negation relates positively to that which it is a negation of.³¹ Furthermore, some interpret it as concerning the

29 Exceptions are, in addition to Brandom, Redding, Paul: *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, and Westphal, Kenneth: *Hegel's Epistemological Realism*, Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.

30 E.g.: Röttges, Heinz: *Der Begriff der Methode in der Philosophie Hegels*, Meisenheim: Hain, 1976, p. 55, p. 238, p. 241), Höhle, Vittorio: *Hegels System*, Frankfurt: Meiner, 1998, p. 194, Wandschneider, Dieter: "Zur Struktur dialektischer Begriffsentwicklung" in: *Das Problem der Dialektik*, Bonn: Bouvier, 1997, p. 159, Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001, p. 76ff, in particular p. 77, p. 83.

31 E.g. Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001, p. 113. This view is also implicit in most accounts of the determinate negation as an operator of change in the dialectical method; as a negation the determinate negation is obviously negative, and as a determination it is *something*, and therefore also positive. Cf. the references given in the previous footnote.

mutual reciprocity of determinations, as for instance when the determinate negation is understood in relation to complementary determinations, a complementarity that is a condition for the possibility of a realization of the speculative synthesis.³² Others focus on the determinate negation as a unity of opposites, as a new concept, which is also “irgendwie die Einheit zweier Begriffe.”³³ So clearly the meaning of the determinate negation is highly ambiguous, not only due to the main conflict of whether it is to be interpreted as exclusive or inclusive, but also due to the variety of senses in which “inclusion” can be understood.³⁴

1.1.3 *Hegel's Inconsistent Use of the Term*

The main inconsistency in the way Hegel uses the term “determinate negation” is that sometimes he puts the emphasis on exclusion and at other times inclusion. This clearly mirrors the state of the research. In total, Hegel refers to the determinate negation six times (referred to in the following with roman numerals):³⁵ Twice the emphasis is on *exclusion* (i/ii), twice the emphasis is

32 Similar views can be found in: Cobben, Paul (ed.): *Hegel-Lexikon*, Darmstadt: WBG, 2006, entry on negation, pp. 335–339. See also Dulceit, Katharina: “Unlikely Bedfellows? Putnam and Hegel on Natural Kind Terms.” in: *Hegel and the Analytical Tradition*, London: Continuum, 2010, p. 127, p. 129.

33 Baum, Manfred: “Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Systematik und Dialektik bei Hegel.” in: *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik. Formation und Rekonstruktion*, Stuttgart: Clett-Cotta, 1986, p. 74. See also Schäfer, Rainer: *Die Dialektik und ihre besonderen Formen in Hegels Logik*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, p. 265, Düsing, Klaus: *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, Bonn: Bouvier, 1995, p. 181, Puntel, Lorenz B.: “Lässt sich der Begriff der Dialektik klären?” in: *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie*, 27(1), 1996, p. 135f.

34 This is also pointed out by Baum, although for different reasons than the one I present here, which concern the ambiguity that arises from the interpretations of it as, on the one hand, *inclusive* and, on the other, as *exclusive*. Utz is also aware of different senses of the determinate negation; both the sense of exclusion as well the sense of inclusion. However, he only sees inclusion as weak inclusion, and calls the unity of determinations *absolute negation*. Awareness of the different senses of the determinate negation is also shown by Ungler in Ungler, Franz: “Die Bedeutung der bestimmten Negation in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik.” in: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Philosophie*, 1975, pp. 154–194. However, Ungler puts too strong focus on the determination negation in the logic of being, leading him to claim that essence is not a determinate negation of being (on p. 177), which is textually false. See 8.2 of this study.

35 According to the GW-edition of *SIII*, Hegel once writes “bestimmt Negation” in a margin note (p. 167), while in another edition – *Jenaer Realphilosophie*. Hamburg: Meiner, 1967, p. 158 – the same sentence refers to “bestimmte Negation.” The Hegel-Archiv has given me a confirmation that the GW-edition is correct; the original manuscript reads “bestimmt Negation.” Even if Hegel intended to write “bestimmte Negation” this would not be very helpful for the interpretation of the term, since the margin note itself is not very informative.

on *inclusion* of one determination in another (iii/iv), and twice emphasis is on that a new determination arises from the nothingness of contradiction, including the immediately preceding determinations in a unity of opposites (v/vi).

The first time Hegel mentions the determinate negation is in one of the manuscripts on logic and metaphysics he wrote in Jena but never published. The determinate negation in question here is that of *Genus* or human life, which is introduced as an opposition to the theoretical I (i). The theoretical I – the I that gives the intelligible conditions of everything – seems to include everything in itself, being fully self-determining. However, as it turns out, human life, as a determinate negation, offers real resistance to it (this will be treated in 4.2.3). Later in the same manuscript, Hegel describes a physical body (or *Gestalt*) on earth as a determinate negation of movement of the solar system, which it develops out of and includes in itself (iii). In *PhG* Hegel introduces the determinate negation as an answer to the nothingness of ancient skepticism, a nothingness that results from two standpoints being opposed with equal force, requiring that all judgments about truth of a matter in question must be withheld (v). Since Hegel understands this nothingness as inherently determinate he can understand the apparently negative movement of consciousness as leading up to a positive, new shape, a movement that proceeds through the different shapes of consciousness until it reaches absolute knowledge, which contains all previous shapes in it and is their truth (see 4.3). In *PhG* Hegel does not go into the details of the methodical aspects of this conception, and his description is rather vague. I believe there are good reasons to identify the determinate negation of *PhG* with the speculative determinate negation of *WdL* (vi), i.e. the unity of two preceding opposite determinations that arises through the dialectical movement of pure thinking (see 10.2 for the exact reasons why I believe this is the case).

This picture of the determinate negation becomes even more complex when Hegel speaks of “determinate negations such as darkness and coldness” (7.4.2), where the focus is on how the full exclusion (absence) of some positive determination can itself be determinate (ii). Finally, Hegel speaks of the essence as a determinate negation that develops out of and includes being in itself (iv), which I treat in 8.2. It is not hard to see that these differences in the way Hegel uses the term “determinate negation,” the varying emphasis on exclusion and inclusion, has produced a state of confusion in the research. To my knowledge, this has gone unnoticed.

1.1.4 *The Root of the Problem and a Possible Resolution*

I believe that the root of the problem is that Hegel’s philosophy is inherently inconsistent when measured according to the standard of the understanding.

If we ask whether or not the determinate negation or any determination at all in Hegel's logic is foremost a matter of exclusion of inclusion, and expect to find a final, clear-cut answer, we will be misleading ourselves. I believe rather that all of the instances where the determinate negation is referred to must be considered as part of a *process* of determination. To indicate the final result of this investigation, I think it is possible to understand the different *forms* of the determinate negation as indicating stages of the process of determination that Hegel sees as lying at the ground of comprehensive and truthful philosophical knowledge.

There is another aspect of this problem that I will return to on multiple occasions, namely the deep conflict between the notion of a speculative unity of opposites and the non-unity of the same. Both seem to exclude each other, and we must therefore ask if a full and final speculative unification of the different (and opposed) determinations of pure thinking is possible or not, or if "inclusion" and "exclusion" have to remain ambiguous terms in principle as far as they are used to describe the movement of pure thinking that Hegel is treating in his logic.³⁶ That this is a problem for Hegel's philosophy is evident already in Hegel's *Differenzschrift* (4.1) and stems from the attempt of the post-Kantian German idealist to re-approach the absolute according to the standards of dialectical thinking and intellectual intuition (treated in chapter 3). As a response to this I develop an interpretation of Hegel's method as thoroughly dynamic and processual. In my view, it is only on such a ground that we can fully understand the relationship between inclusion and exclusion in Hegel's philosophy.

1.2 Overview

This study has two main parts. The first part is historical, the second systematic. The systematic part very much relies on the historical part, since the historical part explains exactly what philosophical problems Hegel was addressing with his conception of the determinate negation. More precisely, in order to give an exact analysis of what the determinate negation is, it is necessary to give an account of certain traditional metaphysical conceptions, Kant's critical

36 Cf. Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls. Hegels spekulative Dialektik in der "Wissenschaft der Logik,"* Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001, p. 182: "Es läßt sich freilich auch unmittelbar einsehen, daß der Einheit von U[nmittelbarkeit] und V[ermittlung] in A[ufhebung] die Unterscheidung von U[nmittelbarkeit] und V[ermittlung] entgegengesetzt ist." Cf. Bubner, Rüdiger: *Zur Sache der Dialektik*, Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980.

response to these as well as his ideas connected to the foundation of a system of transcendental philosophy.

In part one I begin with a presentation of Kant's framework of determination. This starts out being a traditional metaphysical one, but Kant's critical philosophy challenges the metaphysical framework through basing his considerations on the separate contributions of the understanding and sensibility to knowledge. Furthermore, Kant challenges the way we think of determination through introducing the notion of real and dialectical opposition, which makes it necessary to rethink what determination consists of, since, traditionally, determination meant adding a predicate to a subject so that the opposite predicate was excluded. However, Kant's new framework ends up being a dualistic one, enforcing strong limits on our knowledge of how things are in themselves, leaving the question of a unified philosophical system open.

Philosophers following directly in Kant's footsteps, such as Reinhold and Fichte, ask themselves if Kant has delivered a scientific foundation for a possible unified system of transcendental philosophy, if he has or has not formulated such a system implicitly in his critical works, and if he has given a sufficient answer to the skeptic. Regardless of whether Kant has given a proper foundation of transcendental philosophy, Reinhold and Fichte entered into the struggle of formulating both the foundation and the system itself, all "in Kant's spirit." Through his *wz* Fichte showed a new, dialectical way of conceiving the relationship between opposition, which inspired Schelling and Hegel, though they ended up charging him with subjectivism and a failure of bringing comprehensiveness and unity to the system of philosophy.

In Jena, Hegel begins formulating his own distinct way of doing philosophy, building on Fichte's notion of dialectics and Schelling's notion of a comprehensive system of philosophy. Rather than determining things according to how they fit into a framework of relations of exclusion between predicates, and rather than treating the distinction between the understanding and sensibility as all-important for philosophical knowledge, Hegel understands determination as a dynamical relationship between the determinations of pure thinking (i.e. logic and metaphysics). Within his Jena-metaphysics he tries to overcome Fichte's dualist subjectivism, for which any "real other" is only an *Anstoß*, a check, posited by the I. Here the determinate negation is introduced for the first time as *Genus* (human life), which is something that is "self-positing," contains a dynamic relationship of opposition within itself (sexual reproduction), and which itself originally produces the I. Though initially opposed, the I and life become unified as absolute spirit, which contains the whole process of its own becoming in itself. The dialectical or developmental thinking that Hegel develops in Jena is put into action in his philosophy of nature. This

philosophy begins with the concept of ether, which, being pure movement, realizes itself in the solar and earthly system, before returning to itself and spirit. The way Hegel makes use of a developmental logic here is to have something negate itself while not becoming nothing but rather turning into a new shape that includes the preceding development in it.

Still, Hegel lacks a proper methodical foundation for his new metaphysics and philosophy of nature, in particular he still has to give an answer to the skeptic. This becomes the task of *PhG*. Through an investigation of the appearance of consciousness, its different shapes and their development, Hegel seeks to establish the perspective of a dynamic, speculative metaphysics immanently. Hegel connects the dynamic understanding of the basic determinations of pure thinking with ancient skepticism, which allows him to treat the different positions of consciousness to its object in a way where it develops from one opposition to another, which then – through a determinate negation – become united in a new determination. However, Hegel has yet to justify this procedure fully, in particular since he both breaks with the traditional framework of determination and goes down another path than the other post-Kantian idealists. He needs to give an account of how opposed determinations can become unified, why the contradictions of consciousness and pure thinking do not lead to an abstract nothingness – as in tradition – or why they do not simply reaffirm the limits to knowledge that Kant had imposed.

This is all addressed in the second part of this study, which focuses on *WdL*. I begin this part by giving an overview of Hegel's program for his logic, how he conceived a logic of pure thinking that is not based on the opposition of consciousness and does not take the typical presuppositions either of formal or transcendental logic for granted. In the introduction to *WdL* Hegel also introduces the *speculative determinate negation*, which is the term I use for the determinate negation in the sense of a unity of opposites and which corresponds to the third stage of the process of dialectical determination. As this is Hegel's most detailed description of the determinate negation in the whole of his work I perform an analysis of each sentence of the passage in which it is presented. Hegel's own description is itself not very comprehensive. In many instances it is quite enigmatic. I therefore use this analysis for uncovering the issues that has to be treated more closely and, furthermore, as a basis for selecting which parts of *WdL* that I will give a further interpretation of. These issues are, broadly, how something negative can be positive, how something contradictory can resolve into a concrete and not abstract negation, and how a negation can be a new determination, a unity of opposites, a "higher and richer concept" that contains the result of the process of its own becoming in itself, and be part of a process that leads immanently and necessarily to totality.

In my investigation of the doctrine of being, I offer an interpretation of how Hegel's "absolute," i.e. pure thinking, moves from the pure indeterminacy of the beginning to the first triad of concepts in *WdL* (being, nothing, becoming). This gives both a concrete examples of how a negation can be determinate and how this relates to the movement of pure thinking. For instance, the determination *becoming* is analyzed as an example of the speculative determinate negation. Here I also claim that there is a conflict between the unity and non-unity of becoming with the non-unity of the unified determinations, which leads to the question of whether there can ever be any full speculative unification in *WdL*. I investigate this further through giving an interpretation of the concept of the true infinite in Hegel, which is intended to unify the separation and unity of two opposed determinations. The true infinite could be taken to be a final resolution of opposition in Hegel's logic, a full realization of a speculative framework of determination where all oppositions are always mutually related and involved in the determination of everything, but I claim that this cannot be the case, since contradictions keep on turning up later on in the process of *WdL*. Furthermore, I give an interpretation of the logic of *Dasein*, in which Hegel presents his view of the relationship between *reality* and negation as such, and explains how *absence* can itself be a reality of its own. It is in this context that the determinate negation as coldness and darkness will be treated, which sheds light in Hegel's thoughts on the traditional metaphysical notion of negation and nothingness and his alternative to it. This leads up to a treatment of the principle of *omnis determinatio est negatio*, which I claim contains an antinomy that reveals that this principle cannot, as it is often claimed, be the heart of Hegel's thinking, but rather shows the limits of determining something according to the standards of the doctrine of being.

My treatment of the doctrine of essence begins with Hegel's comments on essence as a determinate negation in the sense of one side of an opposition that includes its opposed correlate in itself. Only to a certain extent do the characteristics of this determinate negation overlap with Hegel's other descriptions of it. In particular, this is a determinate negation that neither excludes its opposite nor includes two opposed determinations in a new one. This gives reason to believe that we are dealing with another form of the determinate negation here. In the treatment of the doctrine of essence I also address one of the most central issues relating to the speculative determinate negation, namely that of contradiction. I give an interpretation of the determinations of reflection, identity, difference and opposition, which all come together in Hegel's doctrine of contradiction, which, as I argue, is specific to Hegel and cannot be directly compared to the traditional doctrine, though Hegel intends his own doctrine to go into the deeper conceptual meaning of what

contradiction is. It is also in this context that I will answer the question of how something negative can be positive, which turns out to be a question that is a part of the question of the meaning of contradiction in Hegel's philosophy.

In the doctrine of the concept, Hegel again challenges the traditional metaphysical as well as the Kantian account of concepts, and I focus on exactly how Hegel sees himself building on and going further than Kant when developing his own doctrine. This allows me to give a thorough and hopefully clear and consistent account of how Hegel can claim that a concept can be both "higher and richer" – something that according to both Kant and the traditional doctrine of the concept is a blatant contradiction. I then proceed to give an account of how Hegel seeks to unify theoretical and practical philosophy and understand philosophical knowledge based on his conception of a dialectical method. This gives a final answer to how Hegel creates a distinct philosophy of his own when compared to his contemporaries, and gives an account of exactly how the speculative determinate negation belongs within the method, coming in at the point where the skeptical and antinomical threat to the possibility of philosophical knowledge is at its greatest. Completing the account of the speculative determinate negation, I give an interpretation of the meaning of immanence, necessity and totality in Hegel's philosophy.

Finally, I claim that there are three forms of the determinate negation in Hegel's philosophy, and that these forms, rather than being inconsistent, indicate different stages of one and the same process of determination. Returning to the beginning of this study, I reflect on Hegel's answer to Fichte and Schelling in relation to the methodical foundations of philosophy. Finishing off, I compare Kant and Hegel's framework of determinations, highlighting Hegel's response to Kant. This brings us back again to the beginning of this study, giving it an overall circular structure.

PART 1

*The Background to the Conception of the
Determinate Negation*

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Kant's Doctrine of Determination

Wie aber etwas aus etwas andern, aber nicht nach der Regel der Identität, fließe, das ist etwas, welches ich mir gerne möchte deutlich machen lassen.

KANT, AA II:202

For Kant, determination is the act of adding a predicate to a subject. All predicates are *opposed* to another predicate and therefore adding a predicate to a subject also means excluding the opposed predicate. If two opposed predicates are added to a subject, the result is a contradiction. The result of contradiction is *nothing*, which means that contradictory predication leaves the subject indeterminate. So far, Kant follows the conception of determination prevalent in the rationalist metaphysics that preceded him. However, Kant introduces the notions of *real opposition* and *dialectical opposition*, which have important consequences for the traditional conception of determination. In the case of real opposition, two opposed predicates meet in the same subject without resulting in a contradiction, but rather in a state of neutrality. In the case of dialectical opposition we are dealing with unavoidable but illusory contradictions. Kant resolves these contradictions within the framework of his transcendental philosophy. Basically, the resolution consists of the notion that each predication concerns different aspects of the same subject. Hence the price of consistency is dualism.

Hegel's conception of the determinate negation builds on Kant's thoughts on determination and opposition, and is a response to Kantian dualism on behalf of unity. The determinate negation results from oppositions that meet in the same subject, and unavoidably so, but the result is neither nothing, nor a neutral state, but rather a new determination. This makes a new approach to the unity of a philosophical system possible and has the potential of changing the way we understand philosophical thinking as such. In the following I will first go into Kant's doctrine of determination, treating Kant's view of the relationship between predication and negation, and his critical notion of the thoroughly determinate whole of reality, the so-called transcendental prototypen. Then I will present Kant's challenge to the traditional framework of determination through his introduction of the notions of real and dialectical opposition. Finally, I will investigate Kant's table of categories and his conception of philosophical knowledge. This will give an indication of the role that the

determinate negation will come to play within Hegel's logic and in particular the dialectical method. For Kant, "category" has a specific meaning, namely that of being a form of the understanding that relates a priori to *objects* in a way that logic as such does not;³⁷ neither the concepts of reflection, such as identity and difference, nor the transcendental ideas, are categories for Kant. In his logic, Hegel operates on a more general level, treating the determinations of thinking in a pure manner, i.e. in abstraction from any consideration about their application to any objects of intuition. Of the German idealists, it was particularly Hegel who sought and contributed to the task of an immanent development of the determinations of pure thinking. For Hegel, the movement this development follows becomes the ideal of all philosophical knowledge; a pattern that knowledge must follow in order to reach truth. In § 12 of *KrV* Kant had already suggested a general procedure of philosophical knowledge, which can be seen as a forerunner to Hegel's dialectical method and system. What is needed is a way to move from unity to differentiation and back to unity again, and although Kant gave important contributions to such a project, it became the idealists who struggled with explicating the method and the proper idea of a system that could realize it. In general, Hegel's contribution to this philosophical project is to make it possible to realize an immanent connection and development of the fundamental determinations of thinking. The determinate negation enables the conceptual flow from abstract unity to differentiation and then into a concrete unity. It stands at the different turning points of the opposed determinations of one and the same thinking process.

2.1 Determination and Negation in Kant

Kant's doctrine of determination follows the paradigm of rationalist metaphysics when it comes to *logical* determination, but with the introduction of real opposition and dialectical opposition Kant establishes a critical perspective on this tradition. The doctrine of real opposition allows for a way of understanding determination according to other principles than that of contradiction. In particular, it challenges the traditional conception of negation, where negation is conceived of as a *lack of reality*. The doctrine of dialectical opposition forces us to abandon the questions of the fundamental structure of the world, the question of whether or not there is a necessary being grounding reality, and the question of whether or not we are free. All of this will be treated in

37 B 105.

more detail in the following. For now it can be noted that Hegel continues Kant's critique of metaphysics, and leads it over into a new framework of determination.

2.1.1 *Determination as Predication*

Early in his career, Kant understands "to determine" as the ascription of a predicate to a subject in a way that excludes the opposite of the predicate.³⁸ There is, however, a difference between *logical predication* and *determination*. A determination is a predication that adds something to the concept of the subject that it does not contain in itself.³⁹ Consequently, a determination is synthetic while logical predication is analytic. An example of a logical predication could then be "the body is extended in space," while "the body is 4 kilograms," would be a determination.

In *KrV* Kant claims that no one can think a denial or negation in a determinate way without basing it on an opposite affirmation.⁴⁰ A similar view had already been formulated in his pre-critical writings.⁴¹ If all that existed were negations there would be nothing to think. Kant uses the example of a blind person who, lacking a conception of light, is not able to conceive of darkness. Similarly, someone who is poor is unable to conceive of poverty because of the lack of a conception of wealth. The point seems to be that light and wealth, being affirmations, are more real than darkness and poverty, which are only negations of their respective opposites. Light, wealth and all similar, positive determinations can be thought with no reference to their opposite negations, while the determinations such as darkness and poverty are really only thought as a negation of the opposite positive. As we will see, this is closely connected to Kant's idea that the world has a pre-given content that is basically untouched by any deeper, dialectical relationship between affirmation and negation.

Kant's understanding of determination could also be seen to resemble the notion that *omnis determinatio est negatio*, an important idea both in rationalist metaphysics as well as for Hegel. For Kant a determination brings with it a negation in the form of exclusion: "*Determinare est ponere praedicatum cum exclusione oppositi*."⁴² To determine means to posit a predicate such that the opposite predicate is *excluded*. If we want to determine S through adding

38 AA I:391.

39 B 626.

40 B 603.

41 AA II:87.

42 AA I:391.

predicate P, we thereby mean that there is some opposite to P that does not belong to S.

For Kant, however, the principle that rules determination in *judgments* is not necessarily the same as the principle that rules the determination of reality. For the latter Kant relies on his idea of the *transcendental prototypon* and the idea of a positively given content of the world, i.e. a content that is not essentially determined through negation – negation as denial is a matter that arises within the context of the practice of judgment and does not necessarily have any bearing on objective reality as such. Any deeper connection between the rules of logic that judgments follow and the metaphysical principles of reality would have to be argued for. It is the failure of looking into this, and taking the distinction between sensibility and the understanding into account, that forms the background of Kant's critical philosophy. However, as I will show, Kant does not completely do away with the traditional metaphysical notion that reality as such is positive.

2.1.2 *The Transcendental Prototypon*

The transcendental prototypon is the concept of all things as intelligible,⁴³ or, in other words, things as considered in abstraction from their appearance.⁴⁴ Kant also calls the prototypon the archetype (*Urbild*) of a thing as such, a singular instance that fully corresponds to its concept, or rather *is* its concept. It is not only an ideal as well as an actual, singular being; it is the actual and *only* realization of the idea that fully corresponds to the idea itself. To grasp what Kant means by this, we can think of an ideal human being (take for example any religious figure such as Christ or imagine a perfectly moral and truthful person). This is an ideal being in the sense that it is one instance that partakes in the ideal, but the *ideal itself* is and cannot be otherwise than singular. The ideal itself is an instance that we use to compare our more or less ideal examples to. One could certainly think of many humans that are more or less ideal, but only the ideal itself can fully represent itself.

According to Kant, there can be no actual ideal human being. The ideal serves as a ground for improving ourselves, since it makes clear what our imperfections are. In the same way, the prototypon serves as an ideal ground for the determination of individual things; it is the ideal of a determinate thing as such, through which other, less complete things, receive their thinghood. Simply put, the prototypon is the ideal of the real, and therefore also in a sense

43 B 595.

44 Cf. B 566.

the real as such, since "lesser realities" are only comparatively real in relation to the ideal.

As Kant presents the idea of the transcendental prototypon, it starts out as a neutral idea of everything that is, while in the end of his treatment it stands closer to the theological idea of God (the most real being or *ens realissimum*).⁴⁵ First Kant specifies a series of conditions for what it means to be a being, and it is shown that there is only one being which adequately fulfills these conditions, namely the prototypon as the ideal singular being. It is only through such an ideal being that it is possible for reason to give a unified explanation of the world – i.e. it brings the particular determinations of the world into a necessary relationship with each other, and thus makes the world as a whole into a determinate being. As far as the transcendental prototypon is understood as God, it might seem that Kant wants to make any being, as far as it is anything at all, necessarily connected to God, which would connect all philosophy to rational theology. However, Kant does not think it possible to give a proof of the actual existence of such an ideal being, and rather considers it a regulative ideal. This means that it concerns our ordering of the world as it appears, leaving aside any consideration about the thing as it is in itself. It is within this framework that Kant develops his mature, critical views on what negation and determination of a thing in general means.

Kant considers the transcendental ideal according to the *principle of determinability* and the *principle of thoroughgoing determination*. The principle of determinability says that of two opposite and contradictory predicates, only one can apply to the thing. The reason for this is simply the principle of non-contradiction. This principle also rules concepts. Neither a concept or a concrete thing can be said to be both P and non-P. The principle of thoroughgoing determination states that for anything one of two opposite predicates necessarily belongs to it.⁴⁶ This principle does not apply to concepts. A concept can be indeterminate with regards to a predicate and its opposite. The general concept of a rose does not have to contain one of the predicates red or non-red, but a concrete rose is either red or non-red.

45 Any concept of a world, a so-called transcendental *idea*, differs from the transcendental *ideal* in that the former concerns the totality of *appearances*, while the latter concerns the totality of the intelligible side of things in general. Cf. B 438.

46 See Rohs, Peter: "Kants Prinzip der durchgängigen Bestimmung alles Seienden," in: *Kant-Studien*, 69, 1978, p. 171. As Kant also makes clear in a footnote at B 600, the determinability of a concept is subjected to *tertium non datur*, while the determination of a thing is subjected to the sum of all possible predicates.

The principle of thoroughgoing determination is a *synthetical* principle and belongs to *transcendental* logic, meaning that one needs something more than the principle of non-contradiction in order to establish what counts as possible in relation to it. As Kant states, the principle of thoroughgoing determination concerns not only logical form, but also content.⁴⁷ There is a kind of given *inventory* of possible predicates that may apply to things; belonging to this inventory is what makes a *logically possible* predicate (i.e. one that does not contradict itself) into a *real* possibility. A real possibility can be either synthetic a priori or synthetic a posteriori. Something is *analytically possible* when it is not self-contradictory. It is *synthetically possible* a priori when it complies without contradiction with the formal conditions of experience. It is *synthetically possible a posteriori* when it complies without contradiction with the basic facts of empirical reality.⁴⁸

The principle of thoroughgoing determination is not Kant's invention, but belongs to pre-critical metaphysics. It might seem strange that Kant in the transcendental dialectic, where the whole project of the old metaphysics has been so thoroughly criticized, introduces a synthetic a priori principle that in various ways involves the main areas of the old metaphysics. Kant speaks of thinghood in general (ontology), the world (cosmology) and the highest being (theology). The all-important distinction between appearance and thing in itself fades into the background. Does this mean that Kant wants to rescue a part of the old metaphysics?

In order to answer this, we have to investigate the role of the principle of thoroughgoing determination within the German school of metaphysics and Kant's critique of it. If we look to one of the most important works within this tradition, Baumgarten's *Metaphysic*, we find the notion of *omnimoda determinatio* or *durchgängige Bestimmung* treated in § 114. A thing is thoroughly determinate insofar as its concept contains all its possible determinations. If a thing is thoroughly determinate, then it is a *singular* thing, if not, it is a *universal* thing. The difference between singular and universal on this account is simply that one reaches the singular by adding up all the predicates contained in the thing, while a universal is reached by removing at least one of the predicates. By removing the predicate *red* from a specific rose, I am left with the concept

47 B 600.

48 See Hafemann, Burkhard: "Logisches Quadrat und Modalbegriffe bei Kant," in: *Kant-Studien*, 93, 2002, pp. 413–414. Cf. B 307: "Nun kann aber die Möglichkeit eines Dinges niemals bloß aus dem Nichtwidersprechen eines Begriffs desselbe, sondern nur dadurch, daß man diesen durch eine ihm correspondierende Anschauung belegt, bewiesen werden."

of a rose, or I am at least one step closer to forming the fully universal concept of it. However, if I do not count the predicate *red* to the specific red rose I have before me, then I will not be able to reach its thoroughgoing determination. It follows from this that *being*, in the sense of singular existence, is different from universality only in degree – from this we can form a concept of a complete being, the *ens realissimum*, which is, as we have seen, the being containing all reality, or all possible predicates.

The discourse on the nature of concepts is as old as philosophy itself. Baumgarten belongs to the rationalist tradition and the idea of thoroughgoing determination he presents can be traced back to Plato's method of the division, as exemplified in the dialog *The Sophist*. In this dialogue a general concept is divided into two particulars (species), and as far as the general concept in question is said to belong to one side of the division, it becomes more determined in the sense of being more particular. In the so-called *Porphyrian tree* (named after its neo-platonic inventor) something is defined through such a method of division until the lowest species (the *species infima*) is reached. This species is characterized by the impossibility of further division.

We can find a similar method of division in Kant. For any real (actually instantiated) predicate, we divide the world in two spheres: The sphere of things containing it and the sphere of things that do not contain it. Any determinate thing will necessarily belong to either sphere. Like Baumgarten, Kant understands the full determination of a thing as the full list of its predicates. However, this list must take into account *all predicates*, since a thing is related to all predicates. This makes the list of even the simplest thing as large as the list of all predicates. When one determines a thing, one compares opposite predicates and affirms the one of the thing while denying the other. In order to *fully* determine it, one has to go through the same procedure with all predicates, which means that one would have to have knowledge of the whole of the actual world.⁴⁹

Furthermore, Kant fundamentally disagrees with Baumgarten on the relationship and distinction between universal and singular. For Kant a singular thing can only be individuated fully through intuition; singular things are given through intuitions *alone* – a point that is central to the whole of Kant's transcendental philosophy, and, furthermore, a major point of difference with the earlier metaphysical tradition. The principle of thoroughgoing determination serves the function of an ideal, an ideal that can never be reached; one cannot form the actual, fully determinate concept of a thing, since this requires a complete overview of all predicates. As far as the

49 B 601.

principle concerns the comparison of things on the grounds of the principle of contradiction, it is indeed a logical principle, but it is also transcendental since it draws on the concept-intuition distinction in order to determine what is and what is not a real predicate. Since Kant brings the discussion of the principle of thoroughgoing determination into connection with the distinction between appearance and thing in itself, he secures a place for it within the critical framework. The principle of thoroughgoing determination must in the end be considered on the grounds of the conditions of appearance, much like the transcendental prototypen, which only has validity as a regulative principle. Kant ends the discussion of the prototypen with a reference to the transcendental analytic, and it now becomes clear that the principle of thoroughgoing determination only applies to objects of our senses. In the transcendental analytic of *KrV*, Kant makes it clear that the empirical form of an object must be thought a priori, while the actual material of the object, the sensations, are provided by sensibility, and Kant now claims that the principle of thoroughgoing determination applies to *all predicates of appearance*.⁵⁰ In so far as we transfer this principle into the realm of thinghood as such, it becomes the ground of the concept of the highest being, which, in theology, becomes personified and connected to the idea of God,⁵¹ though, again, this is a sphere containing objects that we cannot claim to have knowledge of. Since Kant restricts the range of application of the principle, he distances himself from the old metaphysics, though he still finds a place for it in his philosophy.

2.1.3 *Kant on Negation*

In general, two forms of negation can be found in Kant. The first is *logical denial*, the second *privation*.⁵² Logical negation is captured by the negative judgment (S is not P), while the privative is captured by the infinite judgment (S is non-P).

Some predicates can have a negative meaning, as in the case of darkness, and this can give grounds for claiming that there is a third form of negation in

⁵⁰ B 610.

⁵¹ B 612ff.

⁵² The privative understanding of negation was common in German scholasticism, as pointed out in Brauer, Daniel: "Die Dialektische Natur der Vernunft," in: *Hegel-Studien*, 30, p. 94. Brauer also points out that for Kant a privation is not a property of a being, but concerns the relationship between a representation and the absence of its object. All of this is due to Kant's transcendental framework of philosophy and affects other conceptions of nothing, as evidenced by Kant's "Table of Nothing" (B 348).

Kant.⁵³ Although “darkness” is logically affirmative, it is still a negation “im metaphysischen Verstande.”⁵⁴ That which logically appears as an affirmative predicate can therefore metaphysically be that which expresses negation (in the sense of a lack of reality). Conversely, the logically negative predicate non-darkness (=light) can be that which expresses a reality (I will return to this point again in the next section).

Whereas logical negation concerns the relation between two concepts in a judgment of which one is affirmative and primary, *transcendental negation* is the opposite of the *transcendental affirmation*; the complete absence of thinghood.⁵⁵ This is a form of “complete negation” or nothingness. In *KrV* we find a “table of nothingness,” based on different ways of relating concepts to objects.⁵⁶ These need not concern us here. In his discussion of the transcendental prototypen Kant makes one of his most revealing statements about his view on negation:

Die logische Verneinung, die lediglich durch das Wörtchen: Nicht, angezeigt wird, hängt eigentlich niemals einem Begriffe, sondern nur dem Verhältnisse desselben zu einem andern im Urteile an, und kann also dazu bei weitem nicht hinreichend sein, einen Begriff in Ansehung seines Inhalts zu bezeichnen. Der Ausdruck: Nichtsterblich, kann gar nicht zu erkennen geben, daß dadurch ein bloßes Nichtsein am Gegenstande vorgestellt werde, sondern läßt allen Inhalt unberührt. Eine transzendente Verneinung bedeutet dagegen das Nichtsein an sich selbst, dem die transzendente Bejahung entgegengesetzt wird, welche ein Etwas ist, dessen Begriff an sich selbst schon ein Sein ausdrückt, und daher Realität (Sachheit) genannt wird, weil durch sie allein, und so weit sie reicht, Gegenstände Etwas (Dinge) sind, die entgegenstehende Negation hingegen einen bloßen Mangel bedeutet, und, wo diese allein gedacht wird, die Aufhebung alles Dinges vorgestellt wird.⁵⁷

Here Kant distinguishes between *logical* and *transcendental* negation; logical negation *only* concerns the relationship between concepts in judgments, while transcendental negation is “pure nonbeing” and opposed to the

53 Wolff, Michael: Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerspruchs*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010, p. 74f.

54 AA II:172.

55 B 602.

56 B 348.

57 B 602–603.

transcendental affirmation, which, furthermore, also is the philosophical concept of God, namely the being which concept implies its existence. The transcendental negation, *nothing*, or the negation of all thinghood, can only be thought of as a contrast, a negation, of the transcendental affirmation. It is also in this context that Kant states that any negation, as far as it is determinate, is grounded in its opposite affirmation: “Nun kann sich niemand eine Verneinung bestimmt denken, ohne daß er die entgegengesetzte Bejahung zum Grunde liegen habe.”⁵⁸ We have already seen the kind of examples Kant gives of this (2.1.1): If you are blind, you cannot conceive of darkness, because you cannot conceive of light, and so forth. As far as one has no direct access to the affirmation, one has no access to the negation.

Negation in the form of denial for Kant can also have the role of “avoiding error”⁵⁹ – when I say that a circle is square-shaped I say something untrue; I avoid this error by a denial, stating that it is not the case that the circle is square-shaped. I do not say, however, “the circle is non-square-shaped,” because square-shaped has not determinate opposite – when I say that something is non-square-shaped, I would not know whether it is triangle-shaped, circle-shaped, or a pentagram, etc. I would know, however, that anything non-square shaped has a shape that is not a square-shape.

2.1.4 *Affirmative Negation and the Infinite Judgment*

In the discussion of the table of judgments in *KrV*, Kant mentions a case where *negations also have an affirmative meaning*. With regards to the *quality* of judgments, Kant differentiates between judgments that affirm and deny, but also includes the so-called infinite judgment, which combines affirmation and denial: The infinite judgment *affirms* a predicate of something, but the predicate itself is a denial. The example that Kant uses is the judgment “the soul is not-mortal.” It is a matter of discussion whether or not infinite judgments properly belong to logic at all. For Kant, infinite judgments are, within the context of general logic, properly treated as affirmative judgments. This can be understood to mean that as far as infinite judgments are part of inferences they are equal to affirmative judgments.⁶⁰

Our concern here, however, is Kant’s claim that the infinite judgment *affirms through denying*. Simple negations or denials (*S is not P*) concern the

⁵⁸ B 603.

⁵⁹ B 97.

⁶⁰ This does not exclude that there can be a formal logical difference between them. See Wolff, Michael: *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1995, pp. 158–159 (especially footnote 236).

relationship between two concepts in a judgment.⁶¹ In the case of infinite judgments, a negation is part of the predicate and affirms a reality:

Nun habe ich durch den Satz: die Seele ist nichtsterblich, zwar der logischen Form nach wirklich bejahet, indem ich die Seele in den unbeschränkten Umfang der nicht sterbenden Wesen setze. Weil nun von dem ganzen Umfange möglicher Wesen das Sterbliche einen Teil enthält, das Nichtsterbende aber den andern, so ist durch meinen Satz nichts anders gesagt, als daß die Seele eines von der unendlichen Menge Dinge sei, die übrig bleiben, wenn ich das Sterbliche insgesamt wegnehme. Dadurch aber wird nur die unendliche Sphäre alles Möglichen in so weit beschränkt, daß das Sterbliche davon abgetrennt, und in dem übrigen Umfang ihres Raums die Seele gesetzt wird. Dieser Raum bleibt aber bei dieser Ausnahme noch immer unendlich, und können noch mehrere Teile desselben weggenommen werden, ohne daß darum der Begriff von der Seele im mindesten wächst, und bejahend bestimmt wird.⁶²

Through the infinite judgment the world of all possible objects is divided into one part that contains the associated predicate (mortal) and one that does not (not-mortal). The infinite judgment places the subject in one of these parts.

The difference between the negative and infinite judgment can become more clear through reflecting on the following two claims:

(A): The soul is not mortal.

(B): The soul is not-mortal (=immortal).

What is the difference between these claims? (A) follows from (B) – but not the other way around: (B) does not follow from (A). (A) can be true when (B) is untrue. Is it possible to imagine such a case? Perhaps if the soul is understood to have the possibility of *resurrection*. Such a soul can die, but also come back to life again. Then it is true that it is not mortal, since it does not really cease to exist when it dies, but it can also not be located positively within the sphere of not-mortal objects – if it were, it would be immortal, it would not die, and so it could not resurrect.

This is perhaps more convincing in the case of the smell of an object, which is Kant's example. Consider the following statements:

61 B 602.

62 B 97–B 98.

- (1) The object is not good-smelling.
- (2) The object is not-good-smelling (=bad-smelling).

It could be the case that (1) is true while (2) is false, namely in a situation where the object has no smell. When, however, (2) is true, then (1) has to be true. When an object is not-good-smelling, it is bad-smelling, and for anything bad-smelling it is true that it is not good-smelling. (1) is therefore a weaker claim than (2). (1) does not actually locate the object on either side of a divide (it leaves open the possibility that it belongs to neither side). (2), however, draws up the divide and decides that the object belongs to one side. As we will see, this analysis of the infinite judgment will play an important role in Kant's antinomies.

For now it can be noted that there is indeed a clear case where Kant thinks that a negation can be determinate. The infinite judgment could be called Kant's "determinate negation."

2.2 Real Opposition

Kant introduces the notion of real opposition in his pre-critical work *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen* (1763). In this work the notion of real opposition leads to certain metaphysical speculations about reality as such, but it also plays a part in Kant's later critical philosophy, in particular in the critique of Leibniz's metaphysics in the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection.⁶³ As we will see later on, Hegel defines his conception of the determinate negation in a way that both builds on and differentiates it from Kant's conception of real opposition.

The most defining difference between real opposition and the other kinds of opposition in Kant is that real opposition does not involve a contradiction. When two determinations stand in an opposed relationship to each other without contradiction, but still cancel each other out, the opposition is real. Here are a couple of examples used by Kant: Two opposing forces that meet, resulting in a neutral state. The opposition between credit and debit, which result in nothing or zero when the debt is paid. Even though equally opposed determinations result in nothing when they meet, each determination is in itself a positive determination. Only as far as they meet do they enter into the relation of mutual cancellation.

63 Wolff, Michael: Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerspruchs*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010, p. 73ff.

The criteria for real oppositions are that the determinations in question

- (1) concern the same subject,
- (2) are not contradictory,
- (3) negate each other and not something else,
- (4) are such that at least one of the determinations is affirmative, and
- (5) cancel out the outcome of each other.⁶⁴

If the determinations do not concern the same subject (as would be the case if they existed in two different subjects) there would be no real opposition, since there would be no common medium in which the determinations meet (the determinations of the other forms of opposition also meet in the same subject, resulting in a contradiction or co-existence). That the opposition is not contradictory is clear enough (if it were it would be either an analytical or dialectical opposition). A contradictory opposition can never be a real opposition, since anything real must also be possible (and for Kant a contradiction is of course impossible). The two determinations must also be the *direct* opposite of each other – otherwise they would not cancel each other out when they meet. Lastly, if none of the determinations affirm anything there would simply be nothing to cancel out. When considering two things having determinations that constitute a real opposition (such as opposed forces), then one is the cause of the cancellation of an effect caused by the other thing.⁶⁵ When the opposed determinations meet in the same subject, this does not reduce the thing to nothing, but removes the initial positive determination. A moving thing is brought to a halt by an opposite force. Similarly, we can ask if “unlust” (aversion) simply is a lack of lust or if it is itself something positive (e.g. a certain state experienced with more or less intensity) that can cause privation (*Beraubung*) of lust. Kant indeed thinks that aversion is negatively opposed to lust. The amount of aversion one experiences must be subtracted from the amount of lust in order to calculate the actual state of lust/aversion. A certain thing that causes aversion cancels out (or reduces) the (amount of) lust inherent in another thing when they meet. The meeting consists of the interaction

64 (1)–(5) are given by Kant here: AA II:175–176. However, to be exact, Kant gives (1)–(4) as a proof for (5), which is the *first rule* of the real opposition. There is also a *second rule*, which states: “Allenthalben, wo ein positiver Grund ist und die Folge ist gleichwohl Zero, da ist eine Realentgegensetzung, d. i. dieser Grund ist mit einem anderen positiven Grunde in Verknüpfung, welcher die Negative des ersteren ist.” The list I have given here will later serve to make to contrast to Hegel as clear as possible (see 10.4.3).

65 AA II:175.

of things through cause and effect; one thing causes lust, and the amount of lust can either be increased or decreased by another thing. If I have no cause for feeling either lust or “unlust” I am *indifferent*; if two opposite causes of lust and “unlust” are present, then I enter into a state of *equilibrium*. In this way there are two states of neutrality, one that results from two actively opposed causes, and one that is not really a result, but the simple absence of the causes.⁶⁶

Kant lists up a range of emotions, phenomena, and even philosophical concepts, that can be analyzed in the same way (hate is negative love, ugliness is negative beauty, error is negative truth, refutation is negative proof, etc.). This can be done because of the two different forms of negation, *Beraubung* (an active removal or decrease) and simple lack. There is, for instance, a difference between not giving and stealing. Both are negations of receiving, but stealing has the added consequence of losing whatever is stolen. Stealing is a cause of loss, while not giving is of itself not a cause of loss.

In his clarification of the conception of real opposition, Kant gives examples of the application of it in different areas such as moral philosophy, psychology and natural science. He attempts to apply the conception of real opposition to change, and makes the interesting and highly metaphysical claim that when any natural state A arises, a negative opposed state –A will also arise.⁶⁷ We have some examples of this in experience. For instance, when we push some object that we are submerged in water together with, the object moves in one direction (A) and we move in the opposite direction (–A). However, it is one thing to claim that we know of examples of such cases from experience, and quite another to say that this principle rules all of nature. Kant is, however, only interested in showing possible applications of his conception of real opposition.

The deeper issue for him is how to conceive of how something is because something else is, how something *flows* from one thing to another according to other principles than that of contradiction.⁶⁸ In the analysis of concepts we find that something follows from another when a concept is part of another concept. Being divisible follows from being composite. If I would say that something composite is indivisible, I would contradict myself. Being composite means being divisible. How should relationships between actual entities be thought when the principle of contradiction is not the only guide? This is a question about the nature of synthetic relationships. That a synthetic

66 AA II:181.

67 AA II:194.

68 AA II:202.

judgment is true cannot be argued for on the basis of the law of contradiction (as is the case with analytic judgments). If it is the case that some things, in order to be real, depend on something else being negated (*aufgehoben*),⁶⁹ then we could start looking for negative counterparts to the real entities. Giving reasons for why S is P would ultimately include giving reasons for why there is an S that is non-P. The reality of P “flows from” non-P. Reality as a whole would then consist of the interaction of dynamical forces, and complete determination would mean to give an account of the whole of positive and negative magnitudes.

This became an important idea in German idealism, for instance when Hegel in his logic posits that anything real has a negative other opposed to it, which also defines it (an idea initially developed by Fichte). The notion that nature consists of an interplay of negative and positive forces became important in Schelling's philosophy of nature.⁷⁰ In *KrV*, Kant employs the notion of real opposition in a critique of Leibnizian-Wolffian metaphysics, although the actual arguments are based on the ideas already laid out in his pre-critical work. For Leibniz, finite realities are only limitations of ultimate reality; they contain some but not all possible predicates. No two opposed predicates can meet in the same finite subject, since this would result in a contradiction. Leibnizian metaphysics can only account for an object's state of rest through saying that it lacks movement. For Kant, however, it could be the case that it either lacks movement or that it is pulled in one direction by one force and in another by an equal and opposite force. Think of a boat travelling upstream with its engine producing the same amount of force as the river, but in the opposite direction. The boat would then appear to be at rest. Not possessing a notion of real opposition, Leibnizian metaphysics cannot account for this.

In *KrV*, Kant claims that the notion of real opposition can only be used when we analyze appearances, not things in themselves.⁷¹ Kant *agrees* with Leibniz's doctrine that realities can never be in logical conflict with each other when it comes to the relationship between concepts and things in themselves. However, the doctrine had limited use, Kant claims, when it comes to nature, social and moral phenomena, since in relation to these we have to pay special attention to the difference between logical and real oppositions. I will return to the ways the German idealists after Kant appropriate the doctrine of real opposition in an attempt to reconceive (the methodical foundations of) logic and metaphysics (particularly in 3.2.1 and 10.3). For now it suffices to note that

69 AA II:203.

70 See Rang, Bernhard: *Identität und Indifferenz*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2000.

71 B 329f. Also: B 320f.

Hegel continues Kant's critical project through giving a critique of metaphysics based on different ways of conceiving the basic structure of thinking; of particular importance becomes the idea that different determinations can meet in the same subject without contradiction (at least not in the traditional sense) while still negating each other. The main point is that this negation is not nothing or results in zero, but is rather determinate and affirmative in a fuller sense than each of the opposed determinations are when they are considered on their own.

2.3 Dialectical Oppositions and the Limits of Human Knowledge

The concept of *dialectical opposition* is introduced by Kant in *KrV* within the context of his treatment of antinomies.⁷² The opposition of the antinomies consists of two apparently contradictory claims that are presented side by side with their respective arguments, both of which appear equally valid. The antinomies relate to the perhaps most important distinction in Kant's transcendental philosophy, namely the one between appearances and things in themselves. Kant claims that even though things in themselves are unavailable to us, we can still have objective knowledge of appearances in time and/or space, since appearances must accord to the conceptual constraints we ourselves supply. This is Kant's *idealist thesis*. We have full access to the products of our own mind and so we also have full access to the conceptual conditions of appearances. In this way transcendental idealism amounts to the claim that everything that can appear to a subject will have a conceptual aspect to it, an aspect which we do not come to know through previous interactions with appearances, but rather through ourselves, since it is we who are the origin of the conceptual framework that makes the experience of objects possible. As we will see, it is on this notion of transcendental idealism that Kant bases his response to the fundamental conflict of reason with itself that is made apparent through the antinomies; transcendental idealism allows for a *resolution* of the antinomies and consequently makes dialectical opposition into an only apparently contradictory opposition.

2.3.1 *The Antinomies of KrV*

It has been claimed that it is "virtually impossible to overestimate the importance of the Antinomy to Kant's critical project."⁷³ The discovery that reason

⁷² B 532.

⁷³ Allison, Henry E.: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, p. 357. As Allison also draws attention to, Kant himself believed that it was the discovery of the antinomy immanent in reason that brought him out of his dogmatic slumber.

can present good arguments for two contradictory views about the fundamental nature of reality means that the whole project of metaphysics is put into question. A critical review of conditions of metaphysics becomes necessary in order to see if it is at all possible to conceive of a metaphysics that is not threatened with inconsistency at its core. It is disputed, however, whether the antinomies really present cogent arguments, especially in the light of newer conceptions of nature and the world.⁷⁴ It is not my concern here to investigate the arguments that can be made for or against what is claimed in the different antinomies, but rather how they relate to the reaction to Kant in German idealism and the formation of Hegel's concept of the determinate negation. This means that I will focus mainly on the general consequences – and not so much the content – of the antinomies and how they are interpreted by Hegel. Some questions, however, must first be answered: What exactly is dialectical opposition? Why is a dialectical opposition only seemingly contradictory? How is the apparent contradiction resolved? What challenges does the dialectical opposition pose to Kant's doctrine of determination and what consequences will the resolutions of them have for it?

In *KrV* Kant presents four antinomies, corresponding to the four main groups of his table of categories. The two first antinomies are called mathematical (relating to the category of quantity and quality) while the latter two are dynamical (relating to the category of relation and modality). The challenge that the antinomies pose to Kant's doctrine of determination is that they appear to show that in some instances it seems necessary to predicate contradictory determinations of the same subject. Kant's approach to this is to show that the oppositions that are involved indeed allow either for the denial, or affirmation, of both predicates. Two of the antinomies allow for a neither-nor solution, while the other two allows for a both-and solution.

The thesis of the first antinomy claims that the world has a beginning in time (and is of limited extension in space), while the antithesis claims the opposite, namely that it does not have any such beginning (and that its extension in space is unlimited).⁷⁵ In his comments on the antinomies, Kant refers to Zenon, a "subtle dialectician," and his question of whether God is finite or infinite, moving or inert, like or unlike something else. Zeno's claim is that God

74 See Priest, Graham: *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002, p. 91 for an example of how modern science makes Kant's arguments in the antinomies problematic. See Allison, Henry E.: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, p. 357, for a general defence that takes into account the standard objections to them.

75 B 454f.

has neither one of the opposed determinations, which Kant seems to agree with, at least in as far as “God” can be understood to mean “the universe.” Kant presents the two arguments in support of such a view. The first says that the universe is neither moving nor at rest, since the universe is not located in any specific place.⁷⁶ The point is clear: Movement only happens *within* the universe – if the universe were to move, it would presuppose another universe in which it moves, and then we are really not speaking of the universe as a whole anymore, just a part of it.

The next argument is, however, not so clear. Kant says that the universe is neither like nor unlike any other thing, since there is nothing outside of it that it could be compared with.⁷⁷ If there were an object outside of the universe with which it could be compared, then we would no longer be dealing with the universe, since the universe is that which contains all things. There is no way to establish a situation where the universe can be compared to something else and when no comparison is possible, it is also impossible to say that the universe is like something else. To say that something is not like anything else is, however, not to say that it is unlike everything else. Both claims must be denied. The universe is not an eligible object for making a comparison – it is not in itself an object of possible knowledge.

The question of whether or not the universe is finite or infinite must be analyzed in a similar way and this leads to Kant’s distinction between dialectical and analytical (logical) opposition. There is a difference between claiming that the universe is either infinite or not infinite, and claiming that the universe is either infinite or finite. In the first claim the alternatives are contradictory and in the latter they are contrary. The reason for this is the distinction between *not infinite* and *not-infinite*. Saying that something is not infinite simply denies that the determination of infinitude is appropriate for the object in question, while saying that it is not-infinite implies that a determination is *affirmed*, namely the opposite determination – if something *is* not-infinite, then it *is* finite. A dialectical opposition consists of two positive determinations of which only one can be said of the object without contradiction, while, however, it might also be the case that *none* of the determinations can be said of the thing. This cannot be said of the analytical opposition, which rather consists of one determination and its denial, and only one of its claims can be true. The analytical opposition is *contradictory*. The dialectical opposition involves two determinations that stand in a *contrary* relationship

76 B 530.

77 B 530f.

(or *subcontrary*, as we will see). While a dialectical opposition allows for the claim that *neither the one nor the other* determination can be affirmed of the object, the analytical opposition does not allow for a neither-nor claim.

Kant's example of an analytical opposition is the following:

With regards to its extension in space,

- (1) the world is infinite, or
- (2) the world is not infinite.

The important point here is that if I say (as Kant thinks one should) that the world is not infinitely extended, then by this I do not say that it is finitely extended (that it has a limit somewhere), I simply deny that the predicate "infinite" is appropriate for describing the extension of the world in space. As soon as one is forced to take a stand regarding which of two opposed positive determinations is appropriate, we get the dialectical opposition:

With regards to its extension in space,

- (3) the world is infinite, or
- (4) it is finite (=not-infinite).

Now, this can in fact be a contradictory opposition, but only under the condition that the size of the world can be determined. Kant thinks it cannot, precisely because the world is not an object. The world as a whole can never be given to us empirically in such a way that we can determine whether it is finite or infinite. Therefore we must deny both predicates. It is the logical and transcendental framework of Kant's philosophy that allows for the resolution of the first antinomy:

Ich kann demnach nicht sagen: die Welt ist der vergangenen Zeit, oder dem Raume nach unendlich. Denn dergleichen Begriff von Größe, als einer gegebenen Unendlichkeit, ist empirisch, mithin auch in Ansehung der Welt, als eines Gegenstandes der Sinne, schlechterdings unmöglich. Ich werde auch nicht sagen: der Regressus von einer gegebenen Wahrnehmung an, zu allen dem, was diese im Raume so wohl, als der vergangenen Zeit, in einer Reihe begrenzt, geht ins Unendliche; denn dieses setzt die unendliche Weltgröße voraus; auch nicht: sie ist endlich; denn die absolute Grenze ist gleichfalls empirisch unmöglich. Demnach werde ich nichts von dem ganzen Gegenstande der Erfahrung (der Sinnenwelt), sondern nur von der Regel, nach welcher Erfahrung, ihrem

Gegenstände angemessen, angestellt und fortgesetzt werden soll, sagen können.⁷⁸

The logical reason for the possibility of the resolution of the antinomy is that the opposition is contrary and not contradictory, while the argument for why the opposition in question actually is of a contrary nature is brought about through the addition of the framework of transcendental philosophy. This allows for an explanation of why a dialectical opposition is apparently contradictory. The dialectical opposition is apparently contradictory because we think that exactly one of the opposed claims of the antinomical arguments must be true. Since this is not the case – both claims can be false and it does not follow that the denial of one of the claims means that the other must be affirmed – the contradiction disappears and the antinomy is resolved.

The resolution of the next antinomy is basically the same. It is claimed, on the one hand, that all composite things in the world consist of simple parts (and all real things are either simple parts or composed of these simple parts). On the other hand it is claimed that no composite thing consist of simple parts (and that no simple parts can be found anywhere in that which is composite). Again, through interpreting the antinomy within the framework of transcendental philosophy Kant shows that both claims are false and the opposition is dialectical and contrary, not contradictory. The next two so-called dynamical antinomies can, however, not be given the same resolution, since the series of conditions for the appearances that are involved in these antinomies allows for a condition that lies outside of the series itself.⁷⁹ This needs some explanation.

The first claim of the third antinomy is that in addition to natural causality there is also the causality of freedom. The counter-claim is that there is *only* natural causality, making the causality of freedom into an illusion. The dialectical opposition in this case cannot be understood as simply consisting of two different determinations, since both the thesis and the antithesis affirms that there is such a thing as natural causality in the world. The actual opposition is between the affirmation and the denial of the claim that freedom causes anything (denying that freedom causes anything does not mean positing an opposite determination, as were the case when denying that the world is finite lead to the claim that it is non-finite (=infinite)). Kant's resolution of this antinomy is closely related to the dualism of transcendental philosophy. He states that it is possible to understand any object as consisting of two sides, namely the intelligible and the sensible, and that although the causality of the intelligible

78 B 548.

79 B 559.

side of the object is of a different nature than the sensible, it can nonetheless give rise to effects that we may encounter in the sensible world.⁸⁰ The causes of the intelligible side have their roots in the will, which determines itself to act according to imperatives and thus transforming something that *should be* into something that *is*. However, this apparently means that the will must give rise to new causal chains, something that is not possible, given that the world contains only natural causes. The causality of freedom is fundamentally different from natural causality, since it is a matter of self-determination according to reason. Such a form of determination does not have any prior cause in time, but is essentially independent. As I understand it, this is what allows for the resolution of the antinomy. The two conceptions of causality must, although they may relate to the same object or event, be understood separately. One concerns the intelligible side of the object, the other concerns the sensible.⁸¹ This makes it possible for both claims of the antinomy to be true, which is to say that they possibly make out a *subcontrary* rather than contradictory opposition. Kant makes it clear, however, that he neither wants to prove that freedom is actually a causal factor in the world, nor that it is possible to think that it is. He has only set out to show how the two forms of causality do not conflict with each other.⁸² If we can show that at least one of the claims of the antinomy *must* be true, and that both can be true, then the opposition involved is *subcontrary*. In order to say that one of the claims must be true, we need two premises, namely that there is causality and that the causality of freedom and natural freedom are the only two forms that exist. The first premise is trivial

80 B 566.

81 This is all summed up nicely in AA v:205f. (*KprV*): “[Der Widerstreit] wurde dadurch gehoben, daß bewiesen wurde, es sei kein wahrer Widerstreit, wenn man die Begebenheiten, und selbst die Welt, darin sie sich ereignen, (wie man auch soll) nur als Erscheinungen betrachtet; da ein und dasselbe handelnde Wesen, *als Erscheinung* (selbst vor seinem eignen innern Sinne) eine Kausalität in der Sinnenwelt hat, die jederzeit dem Naturmechanismus gemäß ist, in Ansehung derselben Begebenheit aber, so fern sich die handelnde Person zugleich als *Noumenon* betrachtet (als reine Intelligenz, in seinem nicht der Zeit nach bestimmbar Dasein), einen Bestimmungsgrund jener Kausalität nach Naturgesetzen, der selbst von allem Naturgesetze frei ist, enthalten könne.”

82 Why doesn't Kant think that the opposition is *contrary*? Kant explicitly claims that there are only two forms of causality conceivable (B 560) – natural causality and the causality of freedom – and one must at least agree that one of them is real, if one does not wish to deny that there is such a thing as causality. I see no reason why Kant would deny that there is causality, and as far as at least one the two possible forms of causality must be real, then the opposition cannot be contrary. To say that they make out a subcontrary relationship is therefore the only option as a solution to the antinomy.

and the second Kant explicitly states.⁸³ Furthermore, Kant's dualism allows for both forms of causality to exist side by side. So the opposition is subcontrary.

The last antinomy also concerns causality and the question of whether or not there exists a necessary being in the world (the thesis affirms and the antithesis denies this), and Kant here also sets out to show how both claims can be true, as he says, insofar as they are considered *each on their own hand*⁸⁴ and *each in a different way* ("verschiedener Beziehung").⁸⁵ In the context of moral action, Kant allows for the existence of a necessary being. The context of moral action is, however, different from the context of empirical investigation of the world, in which the claim that there is no necessary being is justified. Assuming that everything is either necessary or contingent, this opposition also is subcontrary.

The antinomies arise when reason seeks the ultimate ground of the appearances of the sensible world. All appearances are both conditioned as well as given. Reason demands that if anything conditioned is given, then the whole series of conditions for the given is also given, which means that the absolutely unconditioned is also given.⁸⁶ However, there is no way to conceive of the unconditioned as a *sensible object*, so in applying the principle of reason we transcend the sphere of sensibility and start dealing with an object that we do not have access to, namely the thing in itself. There are two ways of understanding the ultimate ground of a given appearance. Either we can understand it as *the* ultimate, unconditioned ground, or we can understand it as an infinite series, which as a whole make out the unconditioned ground. The first claim of the antinomies, the thesis, understands ground in the first sense, the second claim in the second sense.⁸⁷ The confusion between the two conceptions of an unconditioned ground arises, because, unlike for instance the idea of a transcendent being such as God, the world or the whole of nature, refers to something that is not transcendent; it is itself the idea of the whole which consists of nothing other than appearances. It does seem however, that when referring to the whole of appearances, we must be referring to something transcendent, since the whole of appearance is not available to us as discursive beings, i.e. as beings that have the distinction between receptivity and spontaneity as a fundamental condition of their cognitive systems. If I try to conceive of the whole

83 B 560.

84 B 590.

85 B 588.

86 B 436.

87 Here I follow Henry Allison's interpretation in Allison, Henry E.: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 357–395.

of appearance as something I can see, then I will always have a certain perspective on this whole, i.e. I will never have the whole in view.

Kant does not think that the antinomies only present us with illusions that teach us a lesson about trying to expand our knowledge into the infinite. Rather he believes that they contain or hint at deeper points about how we are to conceive of ourselves and the world surrounding us. As I have already pointed out, the antinomies have a decisive impact on Kant's doctrine of determination. Kant's solution allows for either both or none of the contradictory claims of the antinomies to be true. *This means we have to rethink the notion of determination, which rests on the exclusion of contrary predicates.* What can we say about determination when we are dealing with contrary or subcontrary predicates?

When arguing the case for the possibility of two apparently contradictory predicates being in fact contrary, Kant draws on his analysis of the infinite judgment. Recall the false dilemma of having to decide if a body smells good or bad. Kant's point is that some bodies have no smell.⁸⁸ Here one can see that Kant relies on an opposition between good and bad, while claiming that there are some objects for which neither predicates of the opposition apply. The point is quite simply that for any two predicates, A and B, it can be the case that there is a subject S, which is neither A nor B. It would seem that it is possible to give many such examples. There are many things that are neither green nor yellow – such determinations are contrary and not contradictory. Such predicates may seem inessential or accidental, and that only as long as we are dealing with the essential determinations of something, we tend to think in contradictory oppositions. If we let rationality be an essential characteristic of a human being, it seems strange to claim that we can meet human beings that are neither rational nor irrational. Is the smell of an object essential to the object? Unlikely. It stays the same when smelling good, bad and when not smelling at all. However, whether or not the world has a beginning in time seems to be a question about the nature or essence of the world. How can we make sense of Kant's claim that it may be the case that the world neither has a beginning in time nor that it does not?

The main point is again that of transcendental idealism, namely that the principles of the world of appearance cannot be transferred to a transcendent unconditioned being. The determination of time belongs to the world of appearance, not to a transcendent being. In this way, when considering the transcendent, the question of whether it has a specific beginning in time or not can be answered with neither/nor.

88 B 531.

It has become clear that the concept of dialectical opposition in Kant has two different meanings. A dialectical opposition is an opposition that is only apparently contradictory, but which can be shown, on the grounds of transcendental philosophy, to be an opposition that is either *contrary* or *subcontrary*.⁸⁹ By showing that the opposition is one of either the apparent contradiction is resolved. If the opposition involves two determinations that are not appropriate for the object in question (since the object is not a real object at all), then both determination can be denied without contradiction and the opposition is contrary. If the opposition involves only one determination that is both affirmed and denied and it can be shown that the affirmation is true in relation to the intelligible world while untrue in relation to the world of appearances, then both the affirmation and denial can be true; they relate to two different aspects of reality. This means that the opposition is not contradictory but rather subcontrary. The problem with this approach is, however, that we cannot really account for how the two aspects belong to the same reality. This is a problem that Kant does not solve. Still, Kant reflected on this issue, particularly in *KU*, where he presents an idea of a supersensible substrate that connects the aspects, as well as proposing that the way human cognition works makes it impossible to actually know the connection. If we were to know it, we would have to have access to higher forms of knowledge, which we don't.

2.3.2 *The Antinomies of KU*

The antinomy that is presented by Kant in *KdpV* is similar to the third antinomy of *KrV* both in its construction and resolution.⁹⁰ It can therefore be skipped. However, Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (*KU*) contains two further antinomies, the antinomy of taste and the antinomy of judgment, both of which shed new light on Kant's conception of dialectical opposition and how it relates to Kant's dualism.

The first antinomy introduces the idea that the *real* resolution to the antinomy might lie in a "supersensible substrate" that connects all beings. An access to this substrate would essentially dissolve the distinction between the intelligible and the appearing side of the object, and, given the limits of human knowledge, no such access is possible for us. It might seem that the concept of

89 Cf. Malzkorn, Wolfgang: "Analytical and Dialectical Opposition Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Kant's Antinomies," in: "Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung: Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses," Volker, Gerhardt, Horstmann, Rolf-Peter, Schumacher, Ralph, New York: Walther de Gruyter, 2001, pp. 37–44.

90 See Förster, Eckart: "Die Dialektik der reinen praktischen Vernunft," in: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Höfe, Otfried (ed.), Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002, pp. 180–184.

a “supersensible substrate” brings us back to the old metaphysics and as such does not properly belong to transcendental philosophy. But it is clear that Kant does not claim any actual existence of such a substrate. Rather, he rejects that it is possible for any human being to have any knowledge of it, which basically makes any metaphysical claim about it unjustified. That Kant introduces it could still be understood to point in the direction of a fundamental monist sentiment in Kant, i.e. pointing beyond the dualism of the thing in itself and appearance, which is so vital to the understanding of the antinomies and the “pseudo-resolutions” Kant has to offer.

The second antinomy of *KU* involves a conception of a different, non-human, kind of knowledge, for which the framework of transcendental philosophy does not apply, and in many ways inspired the German idealists. This so-called “intuitive understanding” plays an important role for Hegel in his conception of *speculative* reason and the way in which it resolves the contradictions that arise through dialectics. How the intuitive understanding relates to Hegel's conception of speculation and the determinate negation will be treated in further detail later on (9.2.5). For now we will look closer at Kant's idea of the supersensible substrate and the intuitive understanding as they are presented in the context of the two antinomies of *KU*.

The thesis of the antinomy of taste states: The judgment of taste is grounded in concepts. The antithesis states: The judgment of taste is not based on concepts. Here the contradictory nature of the claims is clear. That both claims seem plausible is based on the presupposition (a commonplace notion according to Kant) that even though one cannot use proofs to decide in a matter of taste, i.e. dispute the matter, one can still contend that a judgment of taste is right or wrong and expect that others will agree with one's view. Even though I know that what I like is subjective, it still does seem to make sense that others should agree with this, which is to say that what I like does have some objective likableness and that I am immediately in touch with this objectivity in my experience. Nonetheless, it also seems impossible to specify exactly what in my experience is objectively likeable and to prove its universal validity.

In the section *Auflösung der Antinomie des Geschmacks* (§ 57) Kant explains the difference between determinate and indeterminate concepts. Concepts of the understanding are determinable through a reference to a sensible predicate (connecting a concept with an intuition), while indeterminate concepts are such that one does not have a sensible correlate. Such a concept would be the supersensible itself, or more specifically the transcendental concept of reason that lies at the ground of every intuition. The judgment of taste has such an indeterminate concept as its ground, and Kant now goes on to reformulate how this will resolve the antinomy. New thesis: The judgment of taste

does not rest on determinate concepts. New antithesis: The judgment of taste rests on indeterminate concepts. Interestingly, Kant suggests that the indeterminate concept might be determined by that which lies in the “supersensible substrate” of humanity. The resolution to the antinomy is that the original claims show the possibility of both of them being true, that they can stand beside each other, mediated by something that transcends our faculties of knowledge:

Es kommt bei der Auflösung einer Antinomie nur auf die Möglichkeit an, daß zwei einander dem Scheine nach widerstreitende Sätze einander in der Tat nicht Widersprechen, sondern nebeneinander bestehen können, wenn gleich die Erklärung der Möglichkeit ihres Begriffs unser Erkenntnisvermögen übersteigt. Daß dieser Schein auch natürlich und der menschlichen Vernunft unvermeidlich sei, imgleichen warum er es sei und bleibe, ob er gleich nach der Auflösung des Scheinwiderspruchs nicht betrügt, kann hieraus begreiflich gemacht werden.⁹¹

If we include the case where both the thesis and the antithesis are false, this quote sums up Kant's view of the antinomies. As Kant says, the antinomies of both theoretical and practical reason, as well as that of judgment, show us the need to look beyond the sensible and “im Übersinnlichen den Vereinigungspunkt aller unserer Vermögen a priori zu suchen; weil kein anderer Ausweg übrigbleibt, die Vernunft mit sich selbst einstimmig zu machen.”⁹²

We now turn to the last antinomy of *KU*, the antinomy of judgment. Here we will be able to specify Kant's ideas of what kind of knowledge would be needed in order to reach the supersensible and why he thinks such knowledge is impossible. Here Kant differentiates between determining and reflective judgment. When making a determining judgment, we judge according to already known concepts. Example: Judging that “Socrates is mortal” is based on already known concepts of what it means to be mortal and human. In contrast, the reflective judgment is not based on previous knowledge of the concept of the object at hand, but seeks to form such a concept, subsuming the object under a law that is not given beforehand. The antinomy of judgment arises through the two opposed maxims of the reflective judgment that seeks to understand nature as ruled by both teleological and mechanical laws. Kant says that in order to make any judgment at all and to formulate empirical laws, we are dependent on non-empirical principles. These principles are guiding

91 *KU*, AA V:340.

92 *KU*, AA V:341.

principles or maxims, and concern the most general way in which we understand nature (one being the mechanical and the other the teleological). As *regulative* or guiding principles these maxims state that:

- (1) "Alle Erzeugung materieller Dinge und ihrer Formen muß als nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen möglich beurteilt werden," and
- (2) "Einige Produkte der materiellen Natur können nicht als nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen möglich beurteilt werden (ihre Beurteilung erfordert ein ganz anderes Gesetz der Kausalität, nämlich das der Endursachen)."⁹³

Although these propositions may seem to contradict each other, they do not, according to Kant. The reason for this is that since they only say that one must judge according to the specific principles of mechanism or teleology, they do not say that nature *actually* follow mechanical or teleological laws. The maxims are only guiding principles that serves as a starting ground for further investigation, and one may proceed according to both when trying to find the more specific laws of nature.

Only when the maxims are converted into *constitutive* principles they become, as principles of determining judgment, actually contradictory. The thesis now states:

- (1') "Alle Erzeugung materieller Dinge ist nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen möglich," and the antithesis:
- (2') "Einige Erzeugung derselben ist nach bloß mechanischen Gesetzen nicht möglich."⁹⁴

Being contradictory, one of these propositions must be false. These principles, however, do not make out an antinomy of *judgment* but of *reason*, since they concern what nature as a whole is in itself. We can, however, have no such knowledge of nature through reason alone. We must therefore limit ourselves to giving the mechanical and teleological principles a regulative function, and we must not make the regulative principles of reflective understanding into constitutive ones. If we do that we will bring forth the antinomy again:

93 KU, AA V:387.

94 KU, AA V:387.

Aller Anschein einer Antinomie zwischen den Maximen der eigentlich physischen (mechanischen) und der teleologischen (technischen) Erklärungsart beruht also darauf: daß man einen Grundsatz der reflektierenden Urteilskraft mit dem der bestimmenden, und die Autonomie der ersteren (die bloß subjektiv für unserm Vernunftgebrauch in Ansehung der besonderen Erfahrungsgesetze gilt) mit der Heteronomie der anderen, welche sich nach den von dem Verstande gegebenen (allgemeinen oder besonderen) Gesetzen richten muß, verwechselt.⁹⁵

As far as we *could* produce a complete system of mechanical and teleological laws, we would be forced to admit that the “world itself” is antinomical, a claim that would go in the direction of Hegel’s position.⁹⁶ Kant, however, thinks that the nature of the cognitive capacities of the human being makes it impossible for it to make teleological judgments constitutively. Understanding something teleologically means understanding its parts as being possible through reference to the whole, and that the parts combine in such a way that whole and part are reciprocally cause and effect of each other’s form.⁹⁷ Due to the discursive nature of human cognition, we do not have access to the whole of a given empirical object. This would be possible for an *intuitive understanding*, which we will turn to next. Again, Kant’s resolution of the antinomy rests on limiting the range of human reason, and locating the ground of a possible real solution in the transcendent:

[...] wenn für äußere Gegenstände als Erscheinungen ein sich auf Zwecke beziehender hinreichender Grund gar nicht angetroffen werden kann, sondern dieser, der auch in der Natur liegt, doch nur im übersinnlichen Substrat derselben gesucht werden muß, von welchem uns aber alle

95 KU, AA V:389.

96 Speaking of “the world” in relation to Hegel can be misleading, since this determination is not a proper philosophical determination in his philosophy, at least not after the Jena-manuscripts. See for instance *Enz.* § 247Z, where Hegel calls “the world” “eine Kollektion des Geistigen und Natürlichen.” According to Hegel’s thinking, however, the distinction between spirit and nature is fundamental, and therefore, when speaking of “the world” one should specify whether or not one is speaking of spirit or nature. Still, Hegel – in the same comment to the same paragraph – speaks of spirit as “der für sich existierende Widerspruch,” which indicates that Hegel gives contradiction and antinomies a more objective status than Kant. I will have more to say about this in 8.4, but I have no ambition to fully address the difficult and controversial issue of the nature of contradiction in Hegel’s *Realphilosophie*.

97 KU, AA V:§ 65.

mögliche Einsicht abgeschnitten ist: so ist es uns schlechterdings unmöglich, aus der Natur selbst hergenommene Erklärungsgründe für Zweckverbindungen zu schöpfen, und es ist nach der Beschaffenheit des menschlichen Erkenntnisvermögens notwendig, den obersten Grund dazu in einem ursprünglichen Verstande als Weltursache zu suchen.⁹⁸

Given the conditions that exist for human knowledge, the supersensible substrate is unknowable and can at most be taken as a regulative ideal. The discussion of the characteristics of a kind of knowledge that would be able to reach the supersensible substrate has, however, played an important role in the development of the ideas of the post-Kantian idealists. In total, Kant presents seven antinomies, of which only the two first are solved through understanding the opposition they present as contrary, based on insight provided by the transcendental framework. The resolution of the others relies on the distinction between the intelligible and sensible sides of the object, and on understanding the different claims of the antinomies as made in relation to two fundamentally different aspects of reality. This resolution in turn rests on the fundamental oppositions of transcendental philosophy, such as spontaneity contra receptivity,⁹⁹ analytical contra synthetical, etc. In the development of post-Kantian idealism, these oppositions are not taken as being so strongly opposed as they are in Kant, which means that the oppositions of the antinomies could be reconceived. As we will see, German idealism takes shape as the Kantian limits of knowledge are put into question and the conception of another kind of knowledge that he presents in *KU* § 77 is taken as a form of knowledge that indeed, in one way or another, belongs to the repertoire of philosophy. The German idealists began seeking other such forms of knowledge, both because they took Kant's critique very seriously and that they saw that it led to a skeptical dead end, where philosophy could no longer make a positive contribution to the self-knowledge of man (one of the topics of chapter 3).

98 *KU*, AA V:410.

99 Hegel does not rely on a basic distinction between the faculties. Furthermore, for Hegel, thinking itself must be said to be both receptive and spontaneous. Both of these combine into the idea of the self-guiding, immanently developing thinking. First thinking *spontaneously* brings forth the abstract determinations of the understanding, which then undergoes a dialectical change. The original determination *receives* another sense, which is then *spontaneously* transformed into a speculative unity, through which the content of the previous process of thought again simultaneously *receives* a fully new positive significance.

2.3.3 *Intellectual Intuition and Intuitive Understanding*

For Kant, *human intuition* relate to the *appearances* of things and not *things in themselves*. This gives rise to the notion of another possible species of intuition for which objects are rather things in themselves, and is what Kant calls *intellectual intuition*. Kant also describes it as a form of intuition that “den Gegenstand unmittelbar und auf einmal fassen und darstellen würde.”¹⁰⁰ We can, however, have no knowledge of such a form of intuition;¹⁰¹ we can think of the abstract possibility of intellectual intuition, but since we have no access to it, we cannot tell if it is really possible.¹⁰² The notion of intellectual intuition becomes important for Fichte, who founded his *WL* on the *Tathandlung*, or the intellectual intuition of the I (see 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). Though Fichte draws on Kant, Kant explicitly denies that we can have knowledge about ourselves through intellectual intuition.¹⁰³ Schelling goes even further than Fichte, and formulates a method for an intellectual intuition that is not only valid for the I, but also leads us to knowledge about nature (see 3.3).

Similarly to how we can conceive of another species of intuition, we can also formulate the idea of another species of *understanding*. It arises when we say that we, as human beings, have to consider objects of nature *as if* they follow principles of natural purpose; then we can form the notion of a form of understanding that *actually* knows that natural objects follow such principles. The universal that is brought forth by *human* understanding does not bring with it knowledge about the particular species that belong to the universal, and we can therefore not proceed (through concepts) from the universal to the fully determined singular thing.¹⁰⁴ We will always be dependent on intuition for determining the particulars, and we can never have, as finite, spatio-temporal beings, complete intuition. Kant conceives of a species of intuition that is spontaneous in the same way that thinking is for the human being. This intuition would differ from ours in that it does not relate to sensibility, but is independent, and, since it involves the understanding, could bring knowledge. This is what Kant calls *intuitive understanding* (again insisting that we conceive of this form of knowledge only in contrast to our own, and not as something that we could potentially gain access to). The nature of intuitive understanding would be such that it does not proceed through concepts from the universal, through the particular, to the singular (as is the case in a determining and

100 AA VIII:389.

101 B 307–309.

102 Cf. Kant's use of the *ens rationis* in relation to the empty concept of a noumenon in B 347.

103 B 157–159.

104 *KU*, AA V:405.

not reflective judgment).¹⁰⁵ The concept that is formed by human understanding is *analytical-universal*, while intuitive understanding forms *synthetical-universals* based on an intuition of the whole. From this intuition of the whole the intuitive understanding can proceed to the parts without encountering a gap; when proceeding from concepts to the knowledge of actual things, human understanding encounters a gap between the universal and the singular. When proceeding from intuitions of singular things from concepts, human understanding connects parts into a whole, but can only do so in a contingent manner, which always will leave the possibility open for error. Since the intuitive understanding has full access to the whole as it is, a concrete whole, it would also have full access to the parts that make out the whole.

As Eckart Förster has shown, intellectual intuition and intuitive understanding must not be conflated,¹⁰⁶ and, furthermore, the German idealists after Kant also focused on two specific senses of intellectual intuition and intuitive understanding.¹⁰⁷ Important for them are intellectual intuition in the sense of a productive unity of possibility/thinking and actuality/being, and not as a non-sensible intuition of the thing in itself, while intuitive understanding was important in the sense of synthetic, universal understanding. The notion of intuitive understanding as *original understanding* or as *a cause of the world* was unimportant.¹⁰⁸ In Förster's view, there are basically two lines of development after Kant. The first line develops through with a focus on intellectual intuition and is represented by Fichte and Schelling. Hegel only belongs to this line up until his break with Schelling in the later stages of his Jena-development. Inspired by Goethe, Hegel shifts the focus from intellectual intuition to intuitive understanding, which furthermore forms the ground of his development of dialectics. As Hegel explicitly states in 1831 in his Berlin lectures on the logic, the concept of intuitive understanding is the idea of reason (*die Vernunftidee*).¹⁰⁹

105 Cf. Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2007, p. 173.

106 Förster, Eckart: "Die Bedeutung von §§ 76, 77 der Kritik der Urteilskraft für die Entwicklung der nachkantischen Philosophie," in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 56(2), 2002, pp. 169–190.

107 Ibid., p. 179.

108 As Förster points out, Kant himself uses intellectual intuition in both senses. See B 139 and B 307, A 256, respectively. See Förster, Eckart: "Die Bedeutung von §§ 76, 77 der Kritik der Urteilskraft für die Entwicklung der nachkantischen Philosophie," in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 56(2), 2002, p. 177ff.

109 V 10:66.

I will return to these issues in 9.2.5, where I treat the differences between Kant and Hegel's understanding of the concept.

2.4 Seeds of the System of Transcendental Philosophy

The dualism inherent in Kant's transcendental philosophy becomes a problem that occupied German idealism for decades after Kant. The problem was how to formulate a unified system of philosophy. On the one hand, Kant's dualism seemed necessary in order to protect practical deliberation, but on the other hand, the dualism opened up to skeptical attacks. This will be explored in the next chapter on Fichte and Schelling. As I have indicated, it is, for Hegel, the determinate negation that will guarantee unity and give a sufficient answer to the skeptic. In the following, I will show how this builds on certain ideas found in Kant's philosophy. First I will give a treatment of Kant's table of categories, which are the most fundamental predicates of anything. Hegel's *Science of Logic* is in a sense itself a greatly expanded and transformed table of categories, transformed in the sense that he does no longer consider the categories as a priori conditions for the determination of things and in relation to the distinction between the understanding and intuition. Hegel rather considers them as determinations of pure thinking, i.e. independently of the understanding/intuition-distinction. One further important difference to Kant is that Hegel proposes a way to generate the fundamental determinations of pure thinking, as well as to lead them back into their unity. Interestingly, Kant himself suggests that there is a way to unify the categories, and it is likely that this is something that is followed up on by Fichte and Hegel.

2.4.1 *Kant's Table of Categories*

Kant's table of categories is expounded immediately before the transcendental deduction in *KrV*, where the categories of understanding are "transformed" into conditions of appearance. As such the categories are located at the center of Kant's "Copernican revolution" in philosophy, where the spontaneously produced thoughts of the subject become the conditions of appearance of the object. Through this, Kant fundamentally changes the framework of the discussion between realism and idealism. Since he treats the categories exclusively as conditions for appearance, Kant essentially connects idealism to an empirical, realist outlook.

Kant starts out his investigation of the a priori elements or concepts of the understanding with a remark that it is important that the concepts in question

are pure (not empirical), belong to thinking (not intuition), and are basic (not derived from other concepts or composites of derived concepts); these are the three most basic features of categories.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the categories are concepts that exclusively concern objects of possible objective knowledge. Kant traces the notion of a category back to Aristotle, for whom the categories are the most fundamental genera of entities, in the sense that although the categories may contain different species, they themselves do not belong to any higher genera; there is no highest unifying category and none of the categories are either contained in others or contain other categories in themselves.¹¹¹ In this way, the categories serve as a basic inventory for the ascription of basic predicates to objects of possible knowledge. There is a long running debate, which reached its pinnacle in Scholasticism, about the nature of Aristotle's categories; whether they mainly concern logic or metaphysics, or are simply grammatical constructions. Kant also calls Aristotle's categories pure elementary concepts or predicaments, understood as concepts that do not have any specific experience as their ground, but nonetheless are found in experience, where they "constitute the mere form of connection."¹¹²

An important aspect of Kant's investigation of the categories is that he seeks a complete overview of the categories.¹¹³ This is only possible under the condition that the categories form a system; that they are part of a whole from which they are derivable. It now becomes the main challenge to formulate such a system in a way that guarantees completeness. Kant states that discovering such concepts is closely related to the investigation of the grammatical structure of languages, but it is true that the reason for why there are a specific number of basic grammatical and conceptual determinations remain in the dark.¹¹⁴ Kant charges Aristotle, who first gives a list of ten categories but then adds five so-called post-predicaments, with simply having thought out the categories in a rhapsodic manner, while simply picking up the categories as he happened to come across them.¹¹⁵ The exact number of categories, and especially the related issue of how to derive the Aristotelian categories became a controversial issue within Scholasticism, and it still remains controversial

¹¹⁰ B 89.

¹¹¹ Aristoteles: *Metaphysics*, 1024b12–16.

¹¹² *Prolegomena*, AA IV:322.

¹¹³ Following Michael Wolff, I take completeness to mean completeness of classification, specification and enumeration. See Wolff, Michael: *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, Vittorio Klostermann, Hamburg, 1995, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ *Prolegomena*, AA IV:323.

¹¹⁵ *Prolegomena*, AA IV:323, and also B 107.

whether it is possible to give a rationally convincing procedure of how to decide which categories – if any at all – are basic and which are not. Kant not only rejects simply enumerating the categories as one comes across them, he also rejects a procedure that he calls “almost mechanical,” which consists of observing the process of knowledge over a long period of time. However, such a procedure can never guarantee completeness.¹¹⁶ Still, one could order the categories that are found in this way through certain principles. For instance, as is Kant’s example, ordering them into pairs according to likeness, and in a sequence according to size of the content, proceeding from the simple to the composite. Although Kant admits a certain level of methodical procedure to this, it is not a systematic one, i.e. one that holds a promise of reaching completeness.

What is then Kant’s systematic approach that guarantees completeness of the table of categories? Its most basic feature is this: Each category originates in exactly one fundamental function of judgment.¹¹⁷ As far as we have a complete table of fundamental judgments, we also have a complete table of categories. This does not seem to help much, however – now the issue becomes how to show the completeness of the table of judgments.

The idea of deriving the categories from the various ways in which we judge is not new. Aquinas, in his commentary of Aristotle’s metaphysics, attempted to derive the Aristotelian categories according to the different modes of predication (*modi praedicandi*).¹¹⁸ According to Aquinas, Aristotle’s categories concern *being* as far as it is *external to mind* (*extra animam*), and there are basically three ways of ascribing predicates to subjects within this sphere of being. The first kind of predication concerns what the subject *is*, the second concerns what is *in* the subject, and the third concerns predicates that are *extrinsic* to the subject. Aquinas uses the judgment “Socrates is an animal” as an example of a predication of the first kind; “animal” is the *primary substance* of Socrates. Through judgments of this kind we reach the category of substance. Furthermore, there are two ways in which something can be in a subject. Either something is essentially and absolutely in the subject or it is not. When it is not, it is a *relation* – a comparison of something to something else (“Socrates is taller than...”). When the predicate is essentially and absolutely in the subject, then it can be a predicate which either *flows from the matter* of the subject, or which *flows from the form* – in the first case it is *quantity* and in the latter it is *quality*.

116 B 91.

117 B 105.

118 Aquinas, S. Thomae: “In Libros Metaphysicorum,” in: *Opera Omnia*, vol. 4, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, p. 434 (lib. 5 l. 9 n. 6).

Aquinas basically follows the same procedure throughout in his “deduction” of the categories. He makes distinctions into kinds of two or three, either consisting of concepts or ways in which a predicate can relate to a subject. One can ask why categories such as form and matter are not considered to be categories – and what is the meaning of “flowing from”? Aquinas needs to make use of other fundamental concepts in order to arrive at Aristotle’s list of categories, i.e. it is not just a matter of analyzing different ways of predication. Although Aquinas arrives at an ordered hierarchy of relations, he does not seem concerned with the question of whether or not the list of categories is complete – it seems rather to be the case that he finds a way to order Aristotle’s categories, which number are simply accepted on the grounds of the authority of “the philosopher.” It could indeed be the case that one could give a proof for the completeness of the categories within Aquinas’ interpretation of Aristotle, but this simply does not seem to be the concern of Aquinas.

Even if there were a proof for the completeness of Aristotle’s table of categories, Kant would have to reject it, since he not only finds Aristotle’s procedure in bringing fourth the categories lacking, but also thinks that most of Aristotle’s categories are not proper categories. As we stated above, categories are *pure, basic, and have their origin in thinking*. The categories of *somewhere, sometime and being in a position* (*situs, κείσθαι*) do not have their origin in thinking but in sensibility. The categories *action* and *being acted upon* (*passio, πάσχειν*) are said to be *derived* concepts (Kant does not state from what concept he believes that they are derived), while the category of *movement*, which belongs to the post-predicaments, is an empirical concept, i.e. not pure. However, Kant accepts three of Aristotle’s ten categories, namely *quantity, quality* and *relation* – indeed these are the headings of three of the four groups of categories in Kant’s table (the last one being *modality*).

Kant’s table of judgments was met with a similar kind of objections as he himself had against Aristotle’s list of categories. Kant was accused of simply having picked up judgments from the textbooks on logic of his time, ordering them into a system according to external principles, while forcing through a connection to the categories on less than plausible grounds. Indeed, Kant commends the logicians of his time for having done a kind of preparatory work in regards to a systematic approach to the categories, although this of course does not mean that he has simply taken over the categories that were in common use at the time.¹¹⁹ The issue remains controversial, even though there have been thoroughgoing attempts at proving the completeness of Kant’s table of

119 *Prolegomena*, AA IV:323f.

judgments.¹²⁰ Hegel was one of those who raised such a critique against Kant. However, as has been pointed out, Hegel only has the critique in mind that one cannot simply take up the categories in a quasi-empirical way – he does not accuse Kant of picking up the judgments from textbooks.¹²¹ And in fact the twelve judgments of Kant's table remains intact in Hegel's logic, though they appear under different headings Hegel was not dissatisfied with the actual specification of the judgments, but rather with the way in which they are developed, or the lack of a method through which the different forms of judgment can be connected with the unity of thought. As far as I can see, this is one of the main issues when it comes to Hegel's attempt at developing transcendental philosophy further, or, more precisely, going beyond it, while at the same time preserving and integrating important insights from Kant. The idea of bringing unity to thought is a main motivation for Hegel's development of dialectics, although its scope is much larger than immanently developing the different forms of judgment.

Although it may not be obvious at first, I believe that the real question that lies behind the idea of a systematic treatment of the categories is this: How can one and the same thinking be both universal and particular? What all determinations of thinking have in common is that they are *thoughts*, but each thought is also a particular thought. How do we account for both the unity and differentiation of thinking without dogmatically claiming that thoughts can be both similar and different at once? The question is also more difficult than it may seem at first. What is, for instance, the common thought-element of the negative and positive judgments? What is the common thought-element of contradictory determinations, such as *something* and *other*? What is the common thought-element of being and nothing?

Through his particular treatment of this question – i.e. through not treating these questions as abstract or meaningless questions – Hegel breaks with a long-standing tradition, namely that being is not a genus. To say that being is not a genus is to say that it is not a category that can be divided into species through a differentia, in the same way that the genus *animal* can be divided into *non-rational* and *rational*. The procedure of division into genus and species through differentia appears in Plato's *Sophist*, as a method of definition, and becomes an important part of Aristotelian metaphysics. Aristotle

120 See Allison, Henry E.: *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2004, p. 134ff., and Wolff, Michael: *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, Vittorio Klostermann, Hamburg, 1995, p. 35ff.

121 Wolff, Michael: *Die Vollständigkeit der kantischen Urteilstafel*, Vittorio Klostermann, Hamburg, 1995, p. 36.

explicitly states that *being* cannot be a genus.¹²² One of the fundamental features of a genus is that the genus itself cannot be predicated of its species. Although the human being is a rational animal, one cannot say that rationality as such (species) is in itself of an animal nature (genus). Aquinas later explains this by saying that a *differentia* lies outside of the essence of a genus, and that one cannot find anything that lies outside of being; if it lies outside of being, it is nothing.¹²³ For Hegel, *nothing* can indeed serve as a *differentia* of being. Being can be divided into nothing, and not-nothing. Not-nothing would be pure, abstract being, while nothing would partially be outside and partially inside the essence of being, since nothing, on the one hand, *is* as far as it is determined as indeterminate, while, on the other hand, it simply is nothing as far as it is opposed to being. In the end, however, with the speculative moment, Hegel transforms this relationship such that *becoming* is seen as the proper genus of being and nothing. In this way, Hegel makes first-philosophy into a study of *becoming* and not of being, i.e. finally specifying the proper genus for this science, something that Aristotle was not able to do. Aristotle claimed that every science must have its own genus that defines its area of study,¹²⁴ and although he understood first-philosophy as the science of being qua being, which for him, as we have already have seen, is not genus.

If we look closely, a total of 17 categories can be counted in Kant's table of categories. Quantity contains three (unity, plurality and "allness"/totality), and so does quality (reality, negation and limit). The class of relation apparently contains five, namely *substantia et accidens*, cause/effect and community. It could seem that community itself consist of three categories as far as it is the *reciprocal* relationship between *active* and *reactive*, but it is clear that Kant thinks that categories such as *affection* (Leiden, *passio*) are derived concepts and therefore do not belong to the basic categories.¹²⁵ Finally, the class of modality contains six (possibility/impossibility, existence/non-existence, and necessity/contingence). A strict correspondence with the table of judgments would suggest that there are only 12 categories, which is also what Kant seems

122 See Aristotle: *Metaphysics*, 998b23 and 1059b31.

123 Aquinas, S. Thomae: "In Libros Metaphysicorum," in: *Opera Omnia*, vol. 4, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, p. 434 (lib. 5 l. 9 n. 5): "Nam differentia, cum non participet genus, est extra essentiam generis. Nihil autem posset esse extra essentiam entis, quod per additionem ad ens aliquam speciem entis constituat: nam quod est extra ens, nihil est, et differentia esse non potest."

124 Aristotle: *Posterior Analytics*, I.7.

125 B 108.

to claim.¹²⁶ In addition, we have just seen that Kant states that there are three categories in each class. It seems then that Kant must think of necessity/contingence, existence/non-existence, etc., as *one* category, if there is to be any exact correspondence. In one of his remarks on the table of categories, Kant notes that the third category of a main group is always a connection of the first two.¹²⁷ For instance, necessity is the connection of possibility and existence. However, nothing is said of impossibility in connection with existence or non-existence – are these in any way related to contingency? It seems to me that Kant must have conceived the paired, dynamical categories (groups three and four), as standing in a reciprocal relationship. As such they are themselves examples of a *community relation*, but this would have the consequence that the category of community would be a genus for the category-pair (and possibly itself, insofar as it is a reciprocal relationship between active and passive), making all the paired concepts derived and not basic, which would essentially remove them from Kant's table of categories.¹²⁸

All of this makes the idea of correspondence, as well as the systematic nature of the table of categories, questionable, or at least in need of elaboration and further systematic development. As I will soon argue, it is likely that Hegel, through Fichte, took up some suggestions from Kant in order to improve upon what Kant had originally set out to do in his attempt at giving a systematic ordering and methodical development of the categories. Furthermore, Kant believes that a complete system of categories should also contain the derived ones, a task, however, which Kant does not undertake in *KrV*. He states that he indeed could have done it, but that he at this point is not concerned with the completeness of the system.¹²⁹ His real concern at this point is the doctrine of the method he is developing and not a system of pure reason.¹³⁰ Kant never went on to give a full specification of a system of categories that also contained the derived categories. Such a system can be seen as the task of Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik*. However, in order to fulfill this task, Hegel had to reach clarity concerning his own conception of the development of the

126 And is how the table of categories is usually read, see B 106.

127 B 110.

128 For a discussion of the concept of community and its role within Kant's theory of determination, see Redding, Paul: *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 106–114.

129 B 108f. Kant seems undecided on the matter if he is presenting a system of transcendental philosophy or if he is presenting a critical propaedeutic. Cf. B 346. This issue becomes particularly important for Reinhold and Fichte as I argue in Chapter 3.

130 B 109.

categories of pure thought; the Kantian idea of basing the basic determinations of thinking on judgments is bound up to much with Kant's transcendental philosophy and its doctrine of the faculties, which is rejected by Hegel, since it makes presuppositions that are not warranted (see 6.1).¹³¹ What Hegel seeks is a system of the determinations of pure reason, or of thought in general, a system that can account for both the particular determinations of thought as well as the unity of these determinations in pure thought. Moreover, this relationship between difference and unity has to proceed through a development, through a "deduction" or "derivation," that somehow accounts for both the necessity and the completeness of the system.

Since he did not accept the transcendental philosophical framework and its restriction of treatment to finite consciousness, Hegel could not simply take over, elaborate and refine Kant's idea of a correspondence of the table of judgments with the table of categories. Hegel had to develop something new that he did not find in Kant, something that could provide the unity of thought. He needed a new philosophical method, a new way of conceiving the deeper structures of thought. As we have seen, there are certain hints and traces of a new idea of unity in Kant – but the real innovator, in Hegel's mind, was Fichte:

Bekanntlich hat es die Kantische Philosophie sich mit der *Auffindung* der Kategorien sehr bequem gemacht. *Ich*, die Einheit des Selbstbewußtseins, ist ganz abstrakt und völlig unbestimmt; wie ist also zu den *Bestimmungen* des Ich, den Kategorien, zu kommen? Glücklicherweise finden sich in der gewöhnlichen Logik die *verschiedenen Arten des Urteils* bereits empirisch angegeben vor. Urteilen aber ist *Denken* eines bestimmten Gegenstandes. Die verschiedenen schon fertig aufgezählten Urteilsweisen liefern also die verschiedenen *Bestimmungen des Denkens*. – Der *Fichteschen* Philosophie bleibt das tiefe Verdienst, daran erinnert zu haben, daß die *Denkbestimmungen* in ihrer *Notwendigkeit* aufzuzeigen, daß sie wesentlich *abzuleiten* seien. – Diese Philosophie hätte auf die Methode, die Logik abzuhandeln, doch wenigstens die Wirkung gehabt haben sollen, daß die Denkbestimmungen überhaupt oder das übliche logische Material, die *Arten* der Begriffe, der Urteile, der Schlüsse, nicht mehr nur aus der Beobachtung genommen und so bloß empirisch aufgefaßt,

131 TWA 8:82=Enz. §23Z1. In any distinction such as the one between the faculties, fundamental determinations of thinking operate and how we understand these fundamental determinations will determine our specific doctrines. Hegel sets out to find the most basic and presuppositionless system of pure determinations, which also is a more fundamental self-criticism of reason through itself than the one Kant proposes.

sondern aus dem Denken selbst abgeleitet würden. Wenn das Denken irgend etwas zu beweisen fähig sein soll, wenn die Logik fordern muß, daß *Beweise* gegeben werden, und wenn sie das Beweisen lehren will, so muß sie doch vor allem ihren eigentümlichsten Inhalt zu beweisen, dessen Notwendigkeit einzusehen, fähig sein.¹³²

Clearly, it is evident that Hegel knew that Kant wanted to develop the table categories on the basis of possible judgments, and that Hegel is not satisfied with such an approach. We then have to explain the list of possible judgments. How do they originate? How do they relate to each other? Hegel thinks that Fichte made important progress with regards to these questions. We will return to Fichte's contribution and how it relates to the determinate negation in the next chapter.

2.4.2 *The Significance of the Third Category*

After specifying his table of categories, Kant goes on to make some general remarks on the categories. Kant thinks that what he says can possibly have substantial consequences for the scientific form of all knowledge through reason,¹³³ but the remarks themselves are not very elaborate. This, and the fact that the comments only appear in the B edition of *KrV*, suggests that Kant had not developed these thoughts in detail. The second remark contains an idea that became an important aspect of the idea of dialectics as developed by Fichte, and it also corresponds, albeit roughly, to Hegel's conception of the determinate negation as the speculative unification of opposed determinations.

Kant states:

Daß allerwärts eine gleiche Zahl der Kategorien jeder Klasse, nämlich drei sind, welches eben sowohl zum Nachdenken auffodert, da sonst alle Einteilung a priori durch Begriffe Dichotomie sein muß. Dazu kommt aber noch, daß die dritte Kategorie allenthalben aus der Verbindung der zweiten mit der ersten ihrer Klasse entspringt.¹³⁴

Kant does not explain this further, but gives examples of what this kind of connection means. The category of "allness"/totality is plurality *considered as* unity, limitation is reality *combined with* negation, community is the *reciprocal*

¹³² TWA 8:116–117=Enz. § 42.

¹³³ B 109.

¹³⁴ B 110.

determination of the causality of substances, and necessity is the existence that is *given with* possibility itself. Clearly, there are different ways of connecting categories, but Kant still believes that the connection rests on "a special act of the understanding."¹³⁵

That the classes of Kant's table of categories consist of trichotomies may at first seem suspect – or, as Kant states, invite *Nachdenken*.¹³⁶ Some light can be shed on this matter through a comment Kant adds to his introduction in *KU*:

Man hat es bedenklich gefunden, daß meine Einteilungen in der reinen Philosophie fast immer dreiteilig ausfallen. Das liegt aber in der Natur der Sache. Soll eine Einteilung a priori geschehen, so wird sie entweder analytisch sein, nach dem Satze des Widerspruchs; und da ist sie jederzeit zweiteilig (quodlibet ens est aut A aut non A). Oder sie ist synthetisch; und, wenn sie in diesem Falle aus Begriffen a priori (nicht, wie in der Mathematik, aus der a priori dem Begriffe korrespondierenden Anschauung) soll gefühlt werden, so muß, nach demjenigen, was zu der synthetischen Einheit überhaupt erforderlich ist, nämlich 1) Bedingung, 2) ein Bedingtes, 3) der Begriff, der aus der Vereinigung des Bedingten mit seiner Bedingung entspringt, die Einteilung notwendig Trichotomie sein.¹³⁷

The trichotomic structure is also present in Fichte's and Hegel's dialectic, but this quantitative specification should not blur the factual differences. For Hegel, it is an important aspect of the dialectical method that the contradictory nature of thought-determinations is made apparent, though they also can form a unity; the contradiction is essential for the further development of the thought-determinations into their speculative moment. For Kant, only an analytical division can serve as a basis for a contradiction, and it is possible to unify the categories in the table, so the division in question is synthetical. For Kant, the categories give rise to contradictions only as far as they are expanded beyond the limits of human knowledge, i.e. only as far as they are taken to apply to the thing in itself and not only to appearances. That the categories do not apply to the thing in itself is also an aspect of Kant's doctrine of the categories that Hegel rejects. Critical philosophy, according to Hegel, has indeed

135 B III.

136 B 110.

137 *KU*, AA V:197. Cf. *Jäsche-Logik*, AA IX:147f., § 113: "Doch hat die Einteilung, aus dem *Prinzip der Synthesi* a priori, *Trichotomie*; nämlich (1) den Begriff, als die Bedingung, (2) das Bedingte, und (3) die Ableitung des letztern aus dem erstern."

taken an essential step further in the intellectual history of the human being, in that it does not regard objectivity as something to be found external to the human being, but rather internal to it, in that thinking supplies the condition for appearances.¹³⁸ Hegel thinks that the true standpoint of philosophy regarding objectivity is that the *in itself* of objects is nothing other than thinking itself. This means that he has to reject one of the essential elements of transcendental philosophy. On the one hand, Hegel takes with him the idea that categories can form unities, but, on the other hand, he does not restrict their domain to appearances. Still, he retains some of Kant's critical insights, in that finite thought-determinations are restricted as to how far they can compete for the truth with their opposites in characterizing objects. All categories, all thought-determinations, will fall into contradiction when they are supposed to take an exclusive hold of anything, but the contradictions are essential and point to a unification of the opposed, finite determinations of thought.

This also implies that Hegel will have other reasons for a trichonomic structure in the development of a system of pure thought. Firstly, speculative thinking is not satisfied with basic distinctions such as analytical or synthetical, or even spontaneity and receptivity. Any analytical division will, on the speculative account, be self-defeating or contradictory. Anything that stands in an essentially exclusive relationship will be defined on a deeper level of thought through an inclusive or reciprocal relationship. As far as anything is essentially opposed, they have the common aspect of being other to each other – as this holds for both they are part of the same. As for a synthetic division, this will essentially stand in essentially exclusive relationship to analytical division and then it is, on a deeper level, itself an analytical division. Anything then, for speculative thinking, will be both analytical and synthetical – as a basic distinction they are both not adequate; they are not really basic in the same way as for instance the idea of reciprocal relationship or community is.

2.4.3 *Philosophical Knowledge in §12 of KrV*

The content of §12 was added to the second edition of *KrV* and is usually disregarded in most commentaries on Kant. At first glance, it may seem that Kant mainly wants to dismiss a potential objection from the rationalist metaphysician. Traditionally one had operated with concepts that transcended the categories, expressed by the (supposedly) well-known sentence *quodlibet ens est*

¹³⁸ TWA 8:114=*Enz.* §41Z.

unum verum, bonum.¹³⁹ The question is why the concepts *one*, *true* and *good* (or *perfect*) should not be added to the table of categories. Kant's answer is that these predicates are nothing other than logical conditions for the knowledge of things in general, based on the categories of quantity (unity, plurality, totality). As Kant explains, when we know anything we presuppose the unity of the concept, which binds the manifold together. When we recognize something as a story, we recognize that its theme is numerically one; this is a condition for anything to be a story at all. In this way *qualitative* oneness (the manifold of knowledge brought together to a unity) is based on quantitative oneness. *Plurality* is connected to *truth* in that the objective reality of a concept increases based on the amount of true consequences that follow from it. Finally, *totality* is related to *perfection* in that the plurality of true consequences of a concept is collectively led back to it, so as to exclude the possibility of another concept providing unity to the same plurality. In order to give a *complete* exposition of a concept *all* of these need to be taken into account.

Since it is Kant's view that philosophical knowledge consists of the knowledge of reason from concepts,¹⁴⁰ it is clear that §12 is of much greater significance than it may at first seem. It tells us what *complete philosophical knowledge* consists of. Furthermore, Kant says that adhering to these guidelines brings knowledge in agreement with itself, and it can be shown that Kant indeed follows them in the deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding.¹⁴¹ For the German idealists the focus became bringing knowledge into agreement with itself after Kant had differentiated strongly between practical and theoretical knowledge. Kant had limited the reach of theoretical knowledge in order to give room for practical concerns and understanding the human being as fully self-determining. The consequence was that knowledge was no longer in harmony with itself. Certain principles are valid for theoretical knowledge, others for practical knowledge. The theoretical perspective explains how we are determined by objects, the practical explains how we determine them. As

139 For an overview of the history of these determinations, see Leisegang, Hans: "Über die Behandlung des scholastischen Satzes: 'Quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum seu perfectum', und seine Bedeutung in Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft," in: *Kant-Studien*, 20, pp. 403–421. Leisegang shows how they trace back to Aquinas through Duns Scotus, and were central to Wolff and Baumgarten. I have only been able to locate the sentence in its exact form in von Gablingen, Ulrich: *Imago Dei sive anima rationalis ad expressionem rationis aeternae facta, lectori benevolo ad jucundum intuitum et libertino philosopho ad salutare documentum exhibetur*. Vercelli: Panialis 1772, p. 75.

140 *Jäesche-Logik*, A 20ff.

141 An extensive treatment of this is given in König, Peter: *Zur transzendentalen Deduktion der Kategorien in der B-Auflage der KrV*. Unpublished manuscript.

the third antinomy makes clear, these perspectives are fundamentally conflicting. They can only become united by introducing a dualistic framework, which of course is not a unification at all. The German idealists after Kant felt the need for a new set of philosophical principles and basic concepts. Their take on Kant was that he had many of the right ideas, but had not developed them fully.

Remarkably, the guidelines of § 12 also contain an outline of Hegel's system and the role the method plays within it. Drawing on the work of Hans Friedrich Fulda, we can identify the main task of the program of Hegel's logic developed out of § 12. It is the knowledge of the objects of thinking that are one, true and perfect.¹⁴² It is Hegel's method that *tests* these objects, and, as Fulda points out, when we know that an object is *one* we can test its truth, and when we know an that object is *true*, we can test its perfection (which means that there can be true objects that are not yet *the* perfect object). The initial object of pure thinking is *being*, which is also the initial *oneness* of everything. As Hegel puts it, it is that which is unlike everything but also not different from anything; it is distinct in that it is that through which anything is. Being is one. But being differentiates itself, and it differentiates because it is not in harmony with itself. The specification of what being is makes being into something that it is not, namely its opposite. Pure thinking is led to self-contradiction. Its specification is therefore not adequate. If we investigate the opposite determinations that result from the specification, namely being, we find that it also contradicts itself in its specification. At this point, we could become convinced that truth cannot be reached in pure thinking alone. We have a situation that is similar to the one that the skeptics found themselves in, namely of not being able to determine if the truth is either this or that, since we have reason to believe both (and therefore should prefer neither). We can imagine an *Aufbruch* at this point, where we abandon the ideal of a unified system of the determinations of pure thinking, and claim *indeterminacy* as the result of the investigation (this will be discussed at the end of the penultimate chapter (9.5)).¹⁴³ It is in reply to the situation of indeterminacy, which results from the contradictions that pure thinking entangles itself in, that Hegel develops his conception of the determinate negation. It is that which secures systematic unity where the threat of disunity reaches its highest intensity, leading the self-differentiating pure thinking back to itself, back to its oneness and into its truth.

142 Fulda, Hans Friedrich: "Methode und System," in: *Systemphilosophie als Selbsterkenntnis: Hegel und der Neukantianismus*. Hans Friedrich Fulda, Christian Krijnen (eds.), Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2006, pp. 25–50.

143 Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls. Hegels spekulative Dialektik in der "Wissenschaft der Logik"*, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001, p. 181ff.

As far as the logic goes, this is the process that eventually leads to the perfect object, the absolute idea, in which everything is one, and this fulfills the philosophical knowledge of the pure determinations of thinking. But not only this – indeed, Hegel's whole system (consisting of a philosophy of logic, nature and spirit) follows the way philosophical knowledge is conceived by Kant in § 12. The unity of the logic leads over into nature, in which truth is followed up until its perfection in absolute spirit. Again, it is the determinate negation that offers unity where disunity appears to be the greatest.

In the following, I will focus on the philosophical milieu in which Hegel conceived his most important unifying conceptual tool. This will make clear exactly what questions and problems he was trying to give an answer to. The main problem was the dualism, i.e. non-unity, of Kant's philosophy. In the interpretation of the German idealists, Kant's philosophy not only rested on an inconsistent notion of a thing in itself, but the thing in itself was related to appearances in an incomprehensible way. The distinction between phenomena and noumena may have freed practical philosophy from the illusions of theoretical philosophy and the threat of determinism, but the price was exactly that of disunity in how we understand ourselves as thinking and acting beings. As we will see, it was mainly Fichte's idea of a unified philosophical system that inspired Hegel and enabled him to reconceive the way of philosophical knowledge. The unity is made possible through the immanent differentiation and re-unification of pure thinking through the determinate negation. I take this to be an answer to the task Kant set for himself, namely to discover how something flows into something else, but not according to the rule of identity (i.e. when two things can be identified through a common maker). The other rule that Hegel proposes is that of the rhythm of pure thinking, moving as if it were a pulse, from unity, to differentiation and then re-uniting with itself in a higher form, mediated by the determinate negation, which brings unity where the forces of disintegration are at their strongest. Fichte's contribution to the continuation of Kant's Copernican revolution in philosophy, is to show a new way of thinking unity, differentiation and integration. This can potentially bring subjectivity into unity with the whole of reality. Fichte finds a fundamental unity in the *Tathandlung*, the act that is just as much a fact, just as practical as it is theoretical. This is then differentiated into theoretical and practical philosophy. Fichte also pioneered a new way of thinking unity, namely that of leading oppositions into each other and through this back to their unity. Still, both Schelling and Hegel found his procedure lacking, in particular with regards to the task of leading the differentiated elements back into unity. I will return to the issue of determination and negation in Kant when I give an in-depth comparison of Kant's and Hegel's doctrines in the final chapter.

2.5 Summary

Kant had shown that determination cannot be a simple matter of adding predicates to a subject in a way that excludes the opposite predicate, and of finding the complete set of predicates that belong to a thing. The most important source of his criticism is the distinction between sensibility and the understanding. Due to the non-conceptual nature of intuitions we can never fully specify them through concepts, and, in addition, the old metaphysical doctrines of the relationship between reality and negation had to be restricted in the light of the discovery of the real opposition. According to this discovery, contradiction is not the only rule according to which something can be determined – after Kant one could no longer simply say that determination is a matter of positing a predicate that excludes its opposite. One always has to keep in mind what the source of the objects in question is, i.e. if it is the understanding or intuition: Concepts follow other rules of determination than intuitions.

Furthermore, when reason tries to expand its knowledge to include the unconditioned, it unfailingly entangles itself in contradictions. We should therefore limit the reach of reason. Some apparent contradictions are contrary, others subcontrary. It all depends on the object in question and the way it relates to our faculties. Some apparently contradictory perspectives, such as that of rational agency and natural necessity, can be seen to concern different aspects of the same reality. Kant even postulates a supersensible substrate connecting everyone and everything that can account for the connection between the aspects. The problem is that we cannot do more than postulate such a substrate. We cannot account for the unity, and the result is dualism. However, Kant introduces a different way of conceiving things, where a whole and its parts are mutually related – the intuitive understanding. Such a way of conceiving is not available to us and in any case would follow different rules of conceptuality than the one we have to adhere to.

If we understand the supersensible as the realm of pure thinking itself and intuitive understanding as actually within reach of pure thinking, then we come very close to Hegel's conception of a science of logic. The unity of a philosophical system had to be sought according to other ways of thinking than Kant's. Still, it was Kant who had started the movement that the German idealist followed up on. Indeed, Kant inspired many of their most important ideas. But he had also left the task of an immanent deduction of the fundamental determinations of pure thinking unfulfilled. This means that he had not accounted for the basic unity of thinking with itself. What was needed was an explanation of how thinking can both differentiate itself and integrate its

products into a comprehensive unity. Without such a fundamental unity of thinking, there could be no hope for a non-dualistic system of philosophy. However, Kant had suggested ways in which certain opposed categories could be synthesized into a unity consisting of both. This hints at an important stage in a general procedure of unification. Additionally, Kant conceived of an outline of a comprehensive way of philosophical knowledge, proceeding from unity, to differentiation and back to oneness. What he lacked was an exact conception of such a procedure, and his logic and doctrine of the concept and its separation from intuition blocked the possibility of it. There were some advantages of Kant's dualism, such as giving room for practical reason and faith, but this left him open to skeptical attacks, which made the question of unity and the way it could be established even more precarious.

After Kant

Fichte and Schelling

Fichte and Schelling play an important role in the development of Hegel's philosophy, particularly in his Jena-period (1801–1806). That Hegel both learned from and distanced himself from Fichte and Schelling does not by itself mean that he superseded them, as the narrative often goes. Both Fichte and Schelling continued on their own paths. Unaware of Hegel, Fichte followed a path influenced by his discussions with Schelling up until his death in 1814. It was the late Schelling who witnessed the downfall of German idealism in Berlin in the 1840s. There he delivered lectures consisting of, among other things, a critique of Hegel that became influential in the following century, particularly through Kierkegaard, who was present as a listener. There are different approaches to assessing the relationship between the German idealists. These range from the claim that it was exclusively one of the idealists that fulfilled German idealism,¹⁴⁴ to the claim that they all represent unique forms of fulfillment.¹⁴⁵ My concern here is only the influence Fichte and Schelling had on Hegel through their response to Kant, in particular through how they attempted to develop a system of philosophy and to find an appropriate philosophical method for it. I will first give an outline of the response to Kant and the role Fichte played in it, before I proceed to the main points of Fichte's and Schelling's system at the time they began influencing Hegel. Finally, I will look into Fichte's and Schelling's correspondence from 1800–1802. This forms the background to Hegel's first public appearance as a writer, creating a philosophical identity for himself as a mediator between Fichte and Schelling.

3.1 The Quest for a System of Transcendental Idealism: Anti-Philosophy and Skepticism

In the wake of Kant's critical philosophy followed a rise of skepticism, mainly aimed at its theoretical foundations. Since one of Kant's main concerns was to

144 Schulz, Walter: *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955.

145 Janke, Wolfgang: *Die Dreifache Vollendung Des Deutschen Idealismus: Schelling, Hegel Und Fichtes Ungeschriebene Lehre*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

give an answer to skepticism, the shadow of doubt extended to the very core of his philosophy. In addition, there was a challenge from the proponents of faith, the main figure being Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819), who charged the whole of philosophy with fatalism, nihilism and atheism, a charge that would follow on the heels of all the German idealists. These were not simply intellectual and light-hearted objections – Fichte saw the loss of his professorship in Jena due to charges of atheism. Jacobi was a champion of the individual and of faith, and can therefore be understood as a proto-existentialist. He had already attacked Kant and tried, unsuccessfully, to identify Kant's philosophy with Spinozism.¹⁴⁶ Such identification would imply that Kant was a pantheist, which would put Kant in a difficult position, since pantheism was understood to lead straight into atheism.

Jacobi was very much the anti-philosopher, praising immediacy and feeling while scorning the feeble attempts of humans at grasping the absolute through reason. The nihilism that Jacobi accused Fichte of was a nihilism of the sort that saw everything outside the I as unreal, as a chimera.¹⁴⁷ This may at first seem to be an unfamiliar conception of nihilism. Jacobi understood the human being as a creature very much dependent on God for its connection to a reality greater than itself. God secures the objectivity of truth and sets the moral standard. Without God, philosophy dissolves into subjectivism. This subjectivism was at the core of nihilistic philosophy – “sie löst alles auf im Nichts der Subjektivität.”¹⁴⁸ Jacobi thought it best to leave all philosophy behind and turn to faith.

Later when discussing the relationship between Jacobi and Fichte, Hegel claimed that both of them remained within the nothingness of subjectivity. For Jacobi it was the subjectivity of faith, for Fichte the subjectivity of infinite striving. Still, according to Hegel, it is of vital importance that philosophy passes through and into “nothingness” in order to reach truth. However, it is this “nothingness” which lies beyond the opposition of the finite and the infinite, and which is not really devoid of inherent content.¹⁴⁹ Here we see the beginnings of a conception of a “determinate nothing,” a speculative unifying moment, lying beyond but still including the oppositions that are problematic for philosophy.

146 Cf. Franks, Paul: *All or Nothing. Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2005, pp. 87–91.

147 Jacobi, Friedrich H.: *Jacobi an Fichte*, Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1799, p. 39.

148 Pöggeler, Otto: “Hegel und die Anfänge der Nihilismus-diskussion,” in: *Man and World*, 3(3), 1970, p. 166.

149 TWA 2:410.

It was a general challenge for the idealists to find an answer to the Jacobean anti-philosophy. In particular, they were concerned with the claim that any attempt at rationally understanding God or the absolute implies a limiting of it and thereby making the infinite finite. How can the absolute be revealed to a finite being in thinking, and not through feeling or immediate, non-cognitive, awareness? Furthermore, although Jacobi perhaps did not level the best arguments against Kant's philosophy, the idealists shared some of his concerns with Kantian epistemology. As Jacobi put it, he could not enter Kant's system without the presupposition of a thing in itself, but at the same time he could not stay within it with this conception;¹⁵⁰ Kant's philosophy seemed to rely on at least a minimal knowledge about something that one cannot have any knowledge about at all. However, the objections that had a strong argumentative force came from the less religiously motivated post-Kantian skeptics, to which one could also count Hegel as belonging, as far as he was a proponent of a "self-fulfilling skepticism," and repeatedly dismissed the notion of thing in itself.

Kant had tried to argue a strong case in favor of freedom and leave room open for faith in his philosophy, which means that Jacobi's charges were not particularly threatening to Kantians. There was, however, deep worries about the foundations of transcendental philosophy also within the readership that was friendly towards Kant's critical endeavors. This became more and more acute as skeptical objections were raised from within this readership. Two of the most central skeptics were Salomon Maimon (1753–1800) – who Kant himself recognized as one of his best critics – and the author of *Aenesidemus*, who was at first anonymous, but later was revealed to be Gottlob Ernst Schulze (1761–1833). Schulze also became an important critic of the idealists. The need for a foundation of transcendental philosophy was, however, felt even before the rise of the post-Kantian skepticism. Central to the question of foundation was the questions of systematicity and method. Kant himself had a specific idea of systematicity,¹⁵¹ but it is a matter of discussion if and to what extent he

150 Jacobi, Friedrich H.: *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus. Ein Gespräch*. Breslau, Breslau: Gottl. Loewe, 1787, p. 223.

151 Kant gives us reason to believe that he intended to or at least saw the possibility of developing a system of transcendental philosophy that the critique of reason was propaedeutic to (B 23–30 and B 108–109). In § 12 of the *Transzendente Elementarlehre* in *KrV* he even gives the principles for a system of philosophy. However, later on, in a letter of August 7, 1799, concerning Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, Kant gives us reason to doubt that he had any such intention: "Hierbey muß ich noch bemerken, daß die Anmaßung, mir die Absicht unterzuschreiben: ich habe bloß eine Propädeutik zur Transscendental=Philosophie, nicht das System dieser Philosophie selbst, liefern wollen, mir unbegreiflich ist. Es hat mir

developed a system in his critical writings. In any case, he was aware of the lack of a method for transcendental philosophy.¹⁵²

3.1.1 *Reinhold and the Anesidemus-Review*

It was Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823) who was responsible for making Kant accessible to a larger audience and who in his *Briefe über die Kantische Philosophie* (the first of which was published in 1786) put focus on the content of the latter parts of *KrV*, and taught a rational and critically informed belief in God, immortality and freedom. This proved to be more interesting and accessible than the complex epistemological investigations of *KrV*. However, Reinhold himself was one of those who had worries about the foundations of Kant's philosophy. In his so-called *Elementarphilosophie* Reinhold made an attempt at a systematic re-formulation of Kant's philosophy. That it was such an obscure work was one of the main objections against *KrV* at the time,¹⁵³ and Reinhold wanted to give it a form that had mathematical clarity. This would also make it into a work of science. For Reinhold, the ideals of science were consistency and completeness. These ideals are secured by starting with a first principle, from which further sentences are derived. For Reinhold, the "mathematization" of *KrV* implied taking a stance against the popular philosophers, who preferred common sense to "obscure science."

Thus Reinhold opened up a discussion of first principles that would remain alive throughout German idealism. He claimed that the first principle of a scientific system needs to be self-evidently true, since it cannot itself be proved, and it needs to have some content (i.e. it cannot be a merely formal principle such as the law of non-contradiction) that is not only universally acceptable, but also universally *accepted*. Reinhold took the fact that there is no universal accepted philosophy as a sign for the fact that the highest principle of philosophy had not yet been found.¹⁵⁴ This idea of deriving a system of philosophy from a single principle would play an important role in the further development of German idealism, in particular in the early Fichte and

eine solche Absicht nie in Gedanken kommen können, da ich selbst das vollendete Ganze der reinen Philosophie in der Crit. der r. V. für das beste Merkmal der Wahrheit derselben gepriesen habe."

¹⁵² B 766.

¹⁵³ Reinhold, Karl Leonhard: *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, Prag: Widtmann & Mauke, 1795, p. 15ff.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Breazeale, Daniel: "Between Kant and Fichte: Karl Leonard Reinhold's "Elementary Philosophy";" in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (1982), p. 793.

Schelling. Although Hegel became a strong critic of this procedure, he was still a representative of systematic philosophy and “immanent development.”

The first principle Reinhold claimed to have found for his *Elementarphilosophie* was the *principle of consciousness*, which states that “im Bewusstseyn wird die Vorstellung durch das Subjekt vom Subjekt und Objekt unterschieden, und auf beyde Bezogen.”¹⁵⁵ The subject brings forth a representation that is both related to and distinguished from the subject that produced it and the object it represents. Reinhold was convinced that every human being, simply due to the fact that they are conscious, accepted this principle. Today, after the downfall of introspective psychology, and the rise of naturalism and intersubjectivism, it is quite common to deny that consciousness is real.¹⁵⁶ It may therefore be easy for us to realize that Reinhold’s principle could be denied on philosophical grounds. However, already in his times one of the most serious objections against his philosophy was directed against the principle of consciousness. In his review of *Aenesidemus* – the anonymously published attack on Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosophie* – Fichte goes through all of the objections that are raised against its first principle. Even though Fichte is not fully convinced by the objections against Reinhold, he ends up conceding that the principle, although not untrue, cannot be the highest principle. On certain important points, Fichte is in agreement with the criticism raised in *Aenesidemus*, but he does not end in a skeptical position. Rather he sees it as a reason for improving upon Reinhold’s *Elementarphilosophie*, and this becomes the starting point of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*. We now turn to the specific points of Fichte’s review of the objections against Reinhold.

The first objection in *Aenesidemus* is that the principle of consciousness stands under the principle of non-contradiction and is therefore not the highest.¹⁵⁷ As Fichte points out, Reinhold has already answered this objection, stating that the principle of consciousness is ruled by the principle of non-contradiction, but is not determined by it. The latter principle is only a formal principle, and Reinhold sought a principle that was also material; the principle of non-contradiction only concerned the possibility of something, not the reality, and one could not attain actual knowledge, derived or not, from a formal principle (false knowledge may very well be formally possible).

The second objection is that the principle of consciousness is not determined through itself; the principle involves certain determinations (such as

155 Reinhold, Karl L.: *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Missverständnisse der Philosophen, Band 1*, Jena: Johann Michael Mauke, 1790, p. 167.

156 E.g., Dennett, Daniel: *Consciousness Explained*, Boston: Back Bay Books, 1991.

157 FSW I:5.

“differentiation” and “relation”) that allow for different interpretations and the principle is therefore indeterminate.¹⁵⁸ Here Fichte is more ambiguous. On the one hand, Fichte says that as far as he is concerned, Reinhold has given an adequate explanation of what he means with the concepts used when formulating the principle. On the other hand, he accepts that there is some indeterminacy to the principle – Fichte asks: “Wie nun, wenn eben die Unbestimmtheit und Unbestimmbarkeit dieser Begriffe auf einen aufzuforschenden höheren Grundsatz, auf eine reale Gültigkeit des Satzes der Identität und des Gegentheils bestimmen liesse?”¹⁵⁹ Here Fichte already gives a hint that he thinks he has discovered a principle more fundamental than the principle of consciousness.

Then follows a cluster of three related objections. It is objected that the principle is not universal, that it does not express a fact, and that it is not independent of experience and reflection. *Aenesidemus* shows this through giving examples of instances of consciousness for which the principle is not true. For instance, in the case of simply intuiting something, the subject is not necessarily aware of itself as distinguishing itself and relating itself to an object; this happens when it considers what it has before itself as representation that can be true or untrue, but then the immediacy of intuition is reflected upon and transformed. Still, this goes to show that there are other forms of consciousness than the one indicated by Reinhold’s principle. This means that even though the principle may describe one form of consciousness successfully, it is not a universal principle of consciousness. Fichte is in general agreement with such an objection, since he believes Reinhold’s principle is true for *theoretical*, but not *practical* consciousness, and definitely not for all of philosophy.¹⁶⁰

It is also noted in *Aenesidemus* that the principle of consciousness is synthetic and that it is based on an abstraction from experience. Reinhold’s view was that the principle was analytic, which it needed to be if it was to serve as a necessary ground for a scientific system of philosophy. Fichte sees the principle to have both an analytical and synthetical component: it is – “seiner logischen Gültigkeit nach” – analytical, but at the same time any actual consciousness is a synthetical act. This prompts him to ask if there is a synthesis that is prior to all theses and antitheses.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, it is claimed in *Aenesidemus* that if the principle is based on an abstraction from experience, then it is dependent on the arbitrary selection of characteristics, and cannot be the

158 FSW I:6.

159 FSW I:6.

160 Cf. Breazeale, Daniel: “Between Kant and Fichte: Karl Leonard Reinhold’s “Elementary Philosophy,” in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (1982), p. 811.

161 FSW I:7.

basis for a system. Fichte agrees, saying that he is convinced that the principle of consciousness is not the highest principle. The problem is that it is a principle that rests on introspection. This makes it empirical. And the first principle of the system, its *Grundsatz*, cannot be empirical, since the empirical is contingent. Still, Fichte considers the principle to be a *Lehrsatz* that properly belongs to philosophy.¹⁶²

Having gone through the objections, Fichte announces that he has made a great new discovery on behalf of philosophy. He observes that philosophy tends to be overly concerned with the representation of facts, and claims that real progress can only be made when philosophy starts not with the activity of representing, but rather activity or action itself. Even though Fichte looks to action as the foundation of philosophy, this should not be understood to mean that Fichte simply affirms the primacy of the practical. What he seeks is a principle that is just as much theoretical as it is practical, and which therefore holds promise with regards to the development of a system of philosophy that can connect these branches to the same tree. The principle needs to be such that it represents both a fundamental fact and an activity. Furthermore, this fundamental fact/activity is the condition for all other facts and activities. This is the original insight of Fichte's notion of the *Thathandlung*.

With the *Thathandlung* Fichte introduces a radical idea into philosophy that would have a profound effect on both Schelling and Hegel. The *Thathandlung* is the spontaneous self-creation of the I, which is therefore conceived of as a *causa sui*: "[...] *Ich bin*, und zwar: *ich bin schlechthin, weil ich bin [...]*".¹⁶³ This is a clear break with Kant, since it allows for the intellectual intuition of the I.¹⁶⁴ Towards the end of his *Aenesidemus* review, Fichte sums up his ideas on a new method of philosophy and how to develop it into a system.¹⁶⁵

162 FSW I:8.

163 FSW I:16.

164 It remains open however, to what extent this is a break with Kant. The argument can be made that Fichte agrees with Kant that the I can only be individuated and become aware of itself by being determined from without (as it is argued by Kant in his refutation of idealism). In *Wissenschaftslehre Novo Methodo*, Fichte attempts to make us aware of the self-positing nature of the I by referring us to the difference between being self-aware and being aware of external objects. This suggests a way to read Fichte as agreeing with Kant that self-awareness depends on awareness of external objects, but also claiming that when self-awareness is attained we can philosophically explicate it through intellectual intuition. This would, however, require a complex argument in order to substantiate fully, and I will not attempt it here.

165 FSW I:22.

The I as it is conceived in intellectual intuition is the *pure* self-positing I. This pure I is completely independent, and is opposed to the empirical I, which only exists in relation to an object external to it. Since the pure and empirical I are one and the same I, the I is both dependent and completely independent. This brings the I into contradiction with itself and gives rise to the striving to make externality dependent on the I, realizing the nature of the pure I. This activity is practical reason, and is what strives to unify the I with itself.

This is the basic outline of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* and its method. It starts with the universal I, proceeds to its particular differentiated state, which brings forth a contradiction that necessitates a resolution in order to bring the universal and particular into unity. If we focus on the purely conceptual aspect of this, we have Hegel's method in a nutshell.

3.1.2 *Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre*

When introducing his *Wissenschaftslehre* (*WL*) in *Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre oder der sogenannten Philosophie* (1794) Fichte states that the post-Kantian skeptics, in particular *Anesidemus* and Maimon, have convinced him that philosophy “noch nicht zum Range einer evidenten Wissenschaft erhoben sey.”¹⁶⁶ Following Reinhold, Fichte is committed to the view that if philosophy is going to be a science it needs a first principle.¹⁶⁷ Through his work on the relationship between Reinhold and the skeptics he has, however, come to think of the nature of the basic principle in a radically new way. As indicated, it must be a pure, intellectual act.

However, Fichte struggles with finding an adequate expression of his ideas. He keeps revising the *WL*, which was first published in 1794, and he writes several different introductions to it. The main problem is to formulate and justify its basic principles. Although Fichte admits to the circularity of any procedure that wants to prove the basic principles of knowledge,¹⁶⁸ he constantly seeks new ways to improve and explain his procedure, attempting, finally, in his *Sonnenklarer Bericht*, to “force the reader to understand.”

The two most central issues when it comes to understanding Hegel's relationship to Fichte are *the intellectual intuition of the I* and *reflection*. The intellectual intuition of the I is, in another of Fichte's formulations, “das unmittelbare

¹⁶⁶ FSW I:29.

¹⁶⁷ FSW I:47.

¹⁶⁸ See Rockmore, Tom: “Fichtean Circularity, Antifoundationalism, and Groundless System,” in: *Idealistic Studies*, 25(1), 1995, pp. 107–124.

Bewußtsein, dass ich handle, und was ich handle; sie ist das, wodurch ich etwas weiss, weil ich es thue."¹⁶⁹ Philosophical reflection is opposed to intellectual intuition, since it relies on external or given objects. But Philosophy cannot simply escape the standpoint of reflection. The intellectual intuition of the I only establishes that the pure, or infinite I, is self-positing. The being of that which is thought is not separate from the thinking of it. A finite, empirical thinker, however, is separate from the object that is thought about. The finite thinker uses reflection to come to realize that a pure I dwells in it, and the philosophical system is brought further through reflection upon the discrepancy between the intellectually self-intuiting, i.e. infinite, I and the finite, reflecting I.

As a whole, the *WZ* is a transcendental analysis of (self-)consciousness, seeking to specify the necessary conditions for (self-)consciousness and explicating its a priori structure. In the beginning of the *WZ*, Fichte sets out to find the principle of all knowledge. *Wissenschaftslehre* simply means a doctrine of knowledge, a knowledge of what knowledge is. Whereas we can seek out the principle of knowledge, says Fichte, we can neither give a determination of it nor a proof.¹⁷⁰ What is sought, Fichte says, is a *deed*, an action, the so-called *Thathandlung*, or the intellectual intuition of the I. This *Thathandlung* is that which lies at the ground of every determination of our empirical consciousness, which means that we cannot find it within consciousness. Since we always remain within consciousness, it would seem to be impossible to find that which grounds it. In order to find it, we would have to step out of consciousness, but this would then mean that we would be leaving ourselves behind, and whatever one could discover outside of consciousness would be nothing for us.

Fichte claims however, that we can seek the ground of consciousness, the *Thathandlung*, through abstracting reflection. The starting point for seeking out the ground of consciousness is empirical consciousness itself. We need to abstract from the concrete contents of this consciousness and find some sentence or claim that everyone would agree with. Many claims would be possible candidates; Fichte chooses $A=A$. We now seek the ground of the consciousness that $A=A$. When reflecting on the purely logical sentence $A=A$, we find that it depends upon the conception of a self-determining I. I will not go further into this intricate matter. The important point here is that Fichte relies on reflection throughout *WZ* when it comes to identifying its underlying principle, the original unifying act of the I. It is reflection that leads us from empirical

¹⁶⁹ FSW I:463.

¹⁷⁰ FSW I:91.

conditions to intellectual intuition of the I. In addition, it identifies the discrepancies between the pure and the empirical I, and therefore both bring thinking into unity as well as back out of this unity into differentiation. If we would only have the intellectual intuition of the I, we would rest in oneness, which is useless for the philosopher interested in the relation between oneness and the differentiated empirical consciousness.

The general structure of Fichte's method, which can be hard to glean from the actual text, is that of starting with a certain sentence, which is at first opposed to an equally necessary opposed sentence, but then enter into a reciprocal determination and become united in a synthesis, which resolves what at first seems to be a contradiction¹⁷¹ of the opposed sentences, both of which have an equal validity. For example, we have the sentence "das Ich setz sich, als bestimmt durch das Nicht-Ich."¹⁷² It becomes clear, however, that the I thereby really determines itself, since it determines itself as determined by the not-I. As far as the I is determined, it is determined by the not-I, but this determination is just as much a self-determination; the I has just as much reality as does its negation (the not-I) (one can notice the similarities to Kant's conception of real opposition here).¹⁷³ We may understand this to mean that the I is *partially* determined by itself and *partially* determined by the not I; "Aber beides soll gedacht werden, als *Eins* und *ebendasselbe*, d.h. in eben der Rücksicht, in der das Ich bestimmt wird, soll es sich bestimmen, und in eben der Rücksicht, in der es sich bestimmt, soll es bestimmt werden."¹⁷⁴ Fichte insists therefore that we have encountered a contradiction that we cannot solve by introducing determinations that make it possible for us to speak of different aspects of the same. However, the opposites can be united through the notion of *reciprocal determination*: Determining the I as self-determining always means determining it in relation to the not-I and vice versa (this is likely a development of Kant's notion of the connection of two categories in a third). The two sides are therefore fundamentally connected and must be considered in relation to each other. Although new problems arise for this conception, Fichte states that we have now, as far as the method is concerned, "festen Fuß gewonnen."¹⁷⁵ Fichte has here reached a conception of a differentiated unity, an original a priori synthesis, consciousness, or more precisely: A necessarily self-creating synthesis,

171 Cf. SW I:133f.

172 FSW I:127.

173 FSW I:129f.

174 FSW I:129.

175 FSW I:131.

that is just as much an *act* as a *thought*, and which conditions every instance of empirical consciousness.

From this Grundsynthesis of the I and the not-I every other determination of *WL* is to be developed.¹⁷⁶ The deeds of the I are synthetic, while reflection is analytical. The unity of anything that is opposed is a product of the original synthetic activity of the I. However, as we have pointed out already, this original activity is discovered through reflection.¹⁷⁷ At the end of the treatment of theoretical knowledge in *WL* we arrive at “eine Wechselwirkung, in der das Ich mit sich selbst vollkommen vereinigt ist, und über welche keine theoretische Philosophie hinaufsteigt.”¹⁷⁸ This means that any account of how empirical consciousness relates to objects depends upon the doctrine of the original synthesis of the I. Every instance of empirical consciousness rests on the original synthesis of the I, which makes the differentiation and unity of the knower and the known possible. The I necessarily stands in opposition to the not-I, but enters into a relationship with it where they are reciprocally determined. However, the not-I is not fully led back to the I. This is a realist aspect of Fichte’s *WL*. Fichte does *not* seek to justify the claim that the not-I has its root in the I, only that the not-I is a condition for the possibility of finite consciousness.¹⁷⁹ A complete unity of the I and the not-I could only happen in God and the form of consciousness in which everything is posited by the I is – for us – unthinkable.¹⁸⁰ Here we see a version of Kantian limits to reason in Fichte’s *WL*.

This impossibility of complete unity also has consequences for Fichte’s conception of practical philosophy. In it, the I ends up with unification as an infinite task. As practical intelligence, the I strives to bring the object in accordance with itself, but at the same time the object (the not-I) *has to remain* in order for the I to be.¹⁸¹ This is indeed confounding, since it means that Fichte has not succeeded in uniting practical and theoretical philosophy.

Hegel used this deficiency to point out the limits of Fichte’s philosophical project, but it was Schelling who first arose to the challenge of finding a better way of conceiving a comprehensive unified philosophical system. As we will see, Schelling also runs into problems with establishing the final unity of the system.

176 FSW I:123.

177 FSW I:124.

178 FSW I:246.

179 FSW I:279f.

180 FSW I:253.

181 FSW I:261f.

3.1.3 *Schelling's System des transzendentalen Idealismus*

Schelling presents his version of transcendental philosophy in *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800). In this work, Schelling claims that there are two possible philosophical systems, both of which are necessary. One system starts with the subject and explains the object through referring to its origins in the subject. This system corresponds to Fichte's *WL*. The other system starts with the object and explains how the subject arises from the object, and this is the philosophy of nature. Schelling also alludes to an idea of a unity of both kinds of philosophies, which he later expounds in his so-called philosophy of identity.

As Schelling presents it, the task of transcendental philosophy is to explain how knowledge is possible. Knowledge is understood as the correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*) of something objective with something subjective.¹⁸² In contrast to the philosophy of nature, transcendental philosophy explains how knowledge is possible as far as one considers the subjective as the first.

Knowledge rests on fundamental convictions. One of these is that our representations can correspond completely to objects external to us.¹⁸³ It certainly seems to be the case that objects surrounding us must affect us in an objective way, or that they exert an objective force on our representations; the representations of the outer world in our everyday consciousness indeed seem to be immediately determined from some source outside of us.

However, this is not the only fundamental conviction that we rely on according to Schelling. In addition to believing that our representations of the world are in touch with it, we also believe that the representations that we freely create, such as our intentions and thoughts about how the world *should* be, are able to pass over from ourselves into the world. Schelling now claims that this conviction is opposed to the first one. External representations are characterized by necessity, while the internal representations are spontaneously created. What we need to explain is how that which we ourselves create can affect a world that under normal circumstances is affecting us without us affecting it.¹⁸⁴ The problem is this: Let's say I have an intention of changing the world in a specific way. Whenever I am faced with the situation I want to change, I am already determined by what is external to me. If I imagine a state where I am determining the object, as when I am realizing my intention in an act, the object would no longer determine me, and hence would be nothing to me;

¹⁸² SSW III:339.

¹⁸³ SSW III:346.

¹⁸⁴ SSW III:347f.

I would become one with the object, and truth in the sense of representation would become meaningless.

One could call this an antinomy of theoretical and practical philosophy. Schelling sums it up as follows: "es ist unmöglich, daß zugleich in unserem Erkenntnis Wahrheit, und in unserem Wollen Realität sei."¹⁸⁵ Schelling now states that explaining how representations can be both directed towards and determined by objects on the one hand, and, on the other, how objects can be determined and directed by representations is the highest task of philosophy. The task can neither be solved within theoretical nor within practical philosophy alone, says Schelling, but in a higher middle ground where both are connected.¹⁸⁶

Schelling proposes that one must conceive of a pre-established harmony between the two worlds (the subjective and the objective), in order to approach a new understanding of the issue. One could now easily think that Schelling has the Leibnizian idea of a pre-established harmony in mind. For Leibniz, the pre-established harmony has its origin in God. God guarantees that the inner subjective world appears harmoniously related to the outer objective world. But this does not seem to be the case. Schelling does not bring God into the picture, but rather claims that the pre-established harmony cannot be conceived unless the activity through which the objective world is produced is originally identical to the activity that expresses itself in will.¹⁸⁷ The harmony can be established when the world-producing activity is understood as *unconscious* activity, and the free action of the human being *in* the world is understood as *conscious* activity, i.e. will. Free, world-altering action therefore involves an intention that enters into and directs the will, which so far is a conscious will, but the moment this will actually enters into and alters the world, it becomes unconscious. The harmony consists of the fact that the conscious intentions accord to the world-changes that we witness being realized through our actions. Since the will is unconscious when it changes the world but still is fundamentally *our* will, we can be both determined and determining of the world at once. However, we cannot consciously know this, and it is only a postulate that makes it possible to resolve the conflict of theoretical and practical reason.

For transcendental philosophy it is enough to lead its principle, the I, back to itself out of its differentiation. Although we cannot know if and how the objective world is produced by an unconscious activity that is fundamentally

185 ssw III:348.

186 ssw III:348.

187 ssw III:348.

identical to the activity that expresses itself consciously as will, we can still find a way to lead the I back into itself within the conditions of transcendental philosophy.

Schelling now claims that it is undecided where the identity between the unconscious world-creating activity and the conscious will is to be found, i.e. if it is to be found in nature or in us. Again, it is enough for transcendental philosophy to lead its principle back to itself, to the I. This means that we can find an area of activity of the I where it can be known as fully creative of objectivity, and can recognize itself (become led back to itself) in objectivity. Schelling now points to aesthetic activity as this return, as aesthetic activity is the coincidence of the conscious and the unconscious. This is also an answer to Fichte's notion of infinite striving. Schelling cannot have been satisfied with this notion, since his theory of aesthetic activity is designed to overcome the infinite striving of practical action. Free and conscious action requires that there is a limit to overcome; a full realization would make the I unconscious, since it would no longer have any resistance that makes it aware of itself. So far Schelling is in agreement with Fichte.¹⁸⁸ There is, however, a way beyond this. Sometimes the objective world that opposes us is secretly connected to us. When the *artist* creates through inspiration, something comes from without that still belongs to the subject. The work of art presents to the subject a calm resolution of the inherent conflicts and contradictions of human life. In this way, what comes to the artist in inspiration, which has its source in the unconscious, brings harmony and fulfillment in consciousness, "satisfying our infinite striving," "resolving the last and most intense contradiction."¹⁸⁹

In this way, art becomes the realization of philosophy. It is that which brings the I into unity with itself, out of the necessary conflict between the conscious and unconscious activity of the I. At most this establishes an ideal unity of the I with itself. It does not enter into an actual account for the secret connection between the unconscious and conscious activity, and leaves the question open if it is the I, as the absolute (or as the *Urselbst*),¹⁹⁰ that is the real source of the production of the world, or if it is some unknown and perhaps unknowable objective force that drives the world and the subject into existence. Schelling's attempt at a resolution of the conflict of Fichte's practical philosophy is only

188 Cf. ssw III:614: "...beide müssen getrennt sein, denn sonst ist Identität, aber nicht für das Ich."

189 ssw III:617.

190 That the absolute is the *Urselbst* was added by Schelling in his own copy of the book. See ssw III:615.

ideal; what he finds lacking is a philosophy of nature that explains it on realist terms, starting with the object as the source of the subject. This becomes Schelling's philosophy of nature and what eventually brought him into deep disagreement with Fichte.

3.2 Fichte and Schelling's Correspondence, 1800–1802

The young Schelling became known to the public as a Fichtean, as someone who is doing philosophy in the spirit of the *wL*. Though at first friends, Fichte and Schelling soon grew apart as their philosophical differences became clear. This is documented in the exchange of letters between 1800 and 1802. Looking into this exchange will help us shed light on the way in which Hegel develops his conception of the determinate negation as part of his philosophical method.

The letters are not exclusively focused on philosophical dispute. They also discuss academic collaboration, starting a new philosophical journal, and the possibility of moving in together. The letters, starting out quite formal, show the development of a friendship, which grows more and more close through different trials (such as a conflict with the Schlegel brothers). However, the friendship comes to a rather abrupt halt after the philosophical differences crystallize. None of the dreams of collaboration came true and towards the end of the exchange Schelling has already started working with Hegel on the publication of their own journal, *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*. At the time, Schelling and Hegel were living together in the same house. It is therefore likely that Hegel would have known at least some of the content of the exchange between Fichte and Schelling. At the time Hegel was working on the so-called *Differenzschrift*, where he gives an elaborate account of what he sees as the difference between Schelling and Fichte.

We will first look at the general philosophical ideas and discussion that one finds in the exchange between Fichte and Schelling, before we go into a more detailed investigation of the points that may help in the understanding of Hegel's idea of what philosophical method means. One question concerns what transcendental philosophy really consists of. In general, transcendental philosophy deals with that which makes experiential knowledge possible. Kant indeed has a lot to say on this issue. The whole of *KrV* has this question at its centre. But as we have already indicated, Kant himself neither developed a system of transcendental philosophy, nor a method for it. The question for our post-Kantian, idealist philosophers is then not just what transcendental philosophy is, but also *how* it is done.

3.2.1 *The Philosophy of Nature as a Necessary Complement to Transcendental Philosophy*

The discussion between Fichte and Schelling starts with Fichte rejecting the way Schelling differentiates between transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature as described in the *System des transzendentalen Idealismus*, which had just been released. In *WL*, Fichte had already formulated his particular understanding of transcendental philosophy and its method. He starts out seeking the absolutely first, completely unconditioned principle of human knowledge, the *Thathandlung* – the action that does not occur within our consciousness insofar as it is an empirical one, but rather is that which alone makes consciousness as such possible. As we have seen, the method for discovering the *Thathandlung* is to reflect on the conditions of the possibility of consciousness (going from differentiation to unity). When the unity has been discovered, the further methodical procedure consists of a reflection on the conditions of the possibility of this action itself (which differentiates the unity, and brings it back again through bringing the determinations into a relation of reciprocal determination).

Through this reflection Fichte develops his understanding of the I as self-positing, positing its opposite, the not-I, and finally positing the unity of the I and the not-I (though only in the sense that both are necessary in order to account for finite consciousness). Fichte also claims that there are only two possible philosophical standpoints, namely idealism and dogmatism. Dogmatism claims that everything in the end must be understood as originating in the object, or the thing in itself, while idealism means understanding the subject, intelligence, as the real root of the objective. Which kind of philosophy is the right one cannot be decided on theoretical grounds, it is rather a choice, which depends upon what kind of human being one is.¹⁹¹

In describing the concept of transcendental philosophy Schelling starts with the claim that all knowledge depends on the correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*) of something objective and subjective. In knowledge the subjective and objective are unified in such a way that they are identical. Now, in order to *explain* this identity one will have to start with one of the poles and from there proceed to the other pole. Since there is nothing to tell us which of the poles one should start with, there are two possibilities. One can start with the object and through it arrive at the subject, or one can start with the subject and arrive at the object. These two possibilities represent, respectively, the philosophy of

191 SSW I:434.

nature and transcendental philosophy. As already indicated, Schelling claims that both of these are necessary fundamental sciences of philosophy.

This seems to parallel how Fichte conceived of the two possible philosophical standpoints. The philosophy of nature in Schelling could indeed seem to be of a dogmatic kind, but since Fichte holds Schelling in high regard as a thinker at the time, he simply cannot entertain the idea that Schelling adheres to a dogmatic philosophy. It is clear that Fichte does not believe that a dogmatic, realistic philosophy could somehow be an essential counterpart to transcendental philosophy.

In their correspondence Fichte explains that for him the thing and consciousness must be understood to be *one* in the I. Schelling, contrary to this, understands the I as subject or as intelligence, as something standing over against an object: “Wir können den Inbegriff alles bloss *Objektiven* in unserem Wissen *Natur* nennen; der Inbegriff alles *Subjektiven* dagegen heiße das *Ich* oder die *Intelligenz*.”¹⁹² In addition, nature, for Fichte, is something different than for Schelling – Fichte claims that in transcendental philosophy, nature simply is something found, something found as finished and complete in itself, although its laws belong to intelligence.¹⁹³

Schelling’s reply to Fichte on November 19th 1800 concerns the differentiation between the philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy. Schelling affirms that the differentiation between the two is the main issue of their discussion. Schelling claims that the I, conceived as the reality-producing entity we find in intellectual intuition, simply is – insofar as it is objective – nature.¹⁹⁴ Schelling agrees with Fichte that nature is something found – but only for natural consciousness. For the philosophers, nature is certainly not something that is simply found, but is that which brings everything forth and can be known as such through the abstracting intellectual intuition. And it seems that Fichte would have to agree at least to a certain extent that nature is not something which is simply found for the philosopher; it is found but also determined through the relationship it has with laws of intelligence, which, in transcendental philosophy, forms the ground for making nature a part of intelligence itself. For Schelling, however, this intelligence is a higher potency of natural life. For Fichte, philosophy should not in any way try to understand subjectivity as actually creating the world.

Schelling goes on to point out that he considers transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature as opposite parts of one and the same whole, the

192 SSW III:339.

193 GW III/4:360.

194 GW III/4:363.

system of philosophy. In fact, Schelling wants to deduce nature as an object from the *WL*. As we will see later on (3.3), Schelling thinks that this can be done through an abstraction from the subjective, intuiting part of the intellectual intuition of the *I*, which results in the concept of a purely objective subject-object. This pure subject-object can now be understood as a lower potency of the *I*. However, it remains a question for Schelling if his theoretical philosophy, i.e. his philosophy of nature, is a redundant expansion of the *WL*. He holds this possibility open, but at the same time he believes that such an expansion may be able to dispose of the many existing misconceptions of what idealism really is.

Fichte's answer to this, dated December 27th 1800, starts with the claim that through an extension of the principles of the transcendental philosophy it will be possible to create a transcendental system of the intelligible world which will connect and unify the individual with other individuals and finally with God. These extended principles have not yet been developed in a scientific form, but Fichte says he will begin working on this shortly – until it is done, Fichte believes, such a system that Schelling is developing is at odds with transcendental philosophy, at least in its current state. Thus it will be vital to see how its principles can be extended, if there is going to be a possible resolution of the disagreement.

Fichte continues with a comment on the relationship between the individual and nature. He says that he can only agree with Schelling on the point that the individual is a higher potency of nature under the condition that nature is not only considered to be a phenomenon, but rather contains something intelligible in it. This relates to the previous circle argument; as far as nature is understood as a phenomenon it is brought forth by finite intelligence, and therefore not itself bringing forth this intelligence. From the notes that Schelling has made in the margin of the letter, it is clear that treating nature as something more than a phenomenon is exactly what he is doing – his whole system depends upon this. In addition, he notes that he has not claimed that the *individual* is the higher potency of nature, but *the I*. In any case, Fichte now believes that with his proposed system of the intelligible world, he and Schelling can finally reach an agreement. From the comment of Schelling it seems clear, however, that such an agreement may be much farther away than Fichte believes.

3.2.2 *The Absolute, the Limits of Idealism and the Method of Philosophy*

The next year, Fichte reviews the exchange between them and repeats that he did not want to charge Schelling with committing the vicious circle of explaining nature through intelligence and at the same time explaining intelligence

through nature.¹⁹⁵ He does think, however, that Schelling continues to misunderstand his idealism. Fichte claims that there is nothing lacking in the principles of the *WZ*, only in its completion. This is going to be what he calls the synthesis of the spirit-world.¹⁹⁶ When he earlier attempted to develop such a synthesis, people cried atheism. When trying to unify morality with the notion of God it can happen that God, as transcendent being, becomes superfluous. It was not Fichte's intention to get rid of God, but this was the impression he had given previously during the atheism-controversy. Fichte notes that in every experience of evidence there is a connection between the universal intelligibility from which the evidence arises and the individual consciousness for which something is evident. Fichte therefore thinks that any rational insight, any experience of evidence, has as its basis a form of intellectual intuition, a determinate identity of subject and object.

However, it is not possible to start with this as an objective being (such as the *Thathandlung* as a universal objective ground of everything that is). Rather, Fichte claims, any finite intelligence always starts with *seeing*. In seeing a specific object is united with universal principles.¹⁹⁷ Nature is the appearance of the immanent light of God, and it is not the business of philosophers to explain it since the philosopher is limited by the rules of finite intelligence.¹⁹⁸ Schelling could indeed have gathered that Fichte's standpoint was that of finitude from his 1794-*WZ*. In it, Fichte made it abundantly clear that *WZ* only concerns the transcendental conditions of finite consciousness. It does not say anything about the facts of the world. In particular, it does not make any claims about deducing the opposition that the I meets in the real world from the I itself.¹⁹⁹

On October 3rd 1801 Schelling answers with a very elaborate letter, stating that the identity of the real and ideal is to be found in the identity of thinking and intuiting (referring Fichte to Kant's *KU* §76).²⁰⁰ Schelling claims that Fichte understands *being* to be the same as actuality or reality – for Schelling however, being has no opposite (within being there is no opposition of real and ideal). Being is the absolute unity of the real and ideal. Hence Schelling rejects Fichte's idea of being as a seeing, and Fichte does not go along with the construction of the concept of nature out of an abstraction from the pure

195 GW III/5:44.

196 GW III/5:45.

197 GW III/5:46.

198 GW III/5:49.

199 SSW I:275.

200 GW III/5:81.

intellectual intuition (which, of course, also is a *seeing*) of the I or the subject-object identity.

A further clear point of difference between them is that Schelling claims that one has to *begin* with the absolute synthesis, not have it as an end. As we have seen earlier, Fichte claimed that he wants to *find* the original synthesis in his philosophy. For Schelling, Fichte's philosophy will never reach the absolute as far as it begins with seeing, for anything seen must be something conditioned.²⁰¹ He compares this with Kant's idea of starting with morality and ending up with God (God as a guarantee that moral action will in the end lead to happiness). That Fichte is caught within the finite in this way shows itself, Schelling claims, in Fichte's *Bestimmung des Menschen*. Here Fichte does not find the speculative, and so has to posit it as something reached in faith. Just as faith has no place in geometry, it has no place in philosophy. On these grounds Schelling claims that Fichte does not really know what absolute knowledge is – essentially attacking the core of Fichte's endeavour in the *Wissenschaftslehre*.

In the previous letter, Fichte had claimed that it is impossible to know the real ground of why individuals are separate from each other,²⁰² and Schelling goes on to make a critique that could be said to be quite Hegelian in nature. Schelling claims *das Unbegreifliche* is in fact only *unbegreiflich* for the understanding, which runs into contradictions when it makes an attempt at this, but *for reason* the story is quite different.²⁰³ Schelling makes the same points as Hegel was formulating at the time, and which later becomes an integral part of his philosophy, namely that the understanding will necessarily run into contradictions in philosophical discourse, but that these contradictions have a specific meaning for reason. In this letter Schelling also announces that "dieser Tage ein Buch von einem sehr vorzüglichen Kopf" would be published. The author, of course, is Hegel, and the book is the *Differenzschrift*. But Schelling does not mention Hegel's name. He only says that the book will give a treatment of the difference between Fichte and Schelling. By this time Schelling considers such a difference to be "ein sehr geringes Uebel."²⁰⁴ In other words, he has come to terms with there being a clear difference between his own and Fichte's philosophy.

Schelling expresses disappointment with the fact that people continue to misunderstand and misrepresent his concept of nature, and is astonished that

201 GW III/5:82.

202 GW III/5:48.

203 GW III/5:84.

204 GW III/5:89.

it did not occur to Fichte, as he described nature as the appearance of the immanent light, that “*eben dieß zu beweisen, könnte Zweck der Naturphilosophie seyn.*”²⁰⁵ And now he states what he considers to be the main difference between the two: “Ob ich die Reihe des Bedingten reell oder ideell mache ist, speculativ betrachtet, völlig gleichgültig, denn in dem Einen Falle so wenig wie in dem andere, komme ich aus dem Endlichen heraus.”²⁰⁶

The exchange is now drawing to a close. Fichte answers Schelling the same month, and bluntly states that everything Schelling has to say about him and his views is based upon a misjudgement and depreciation of his standpoint. Fichte now states what he believes to be the point of difference between the two, namely, as Schelling had stated in his last letter to Fichte, that the absolute exists “*unter der Form der quantitativen Differenz.*”²⁰⁷ With this, Schelling means that nature is *more real* than spirit, while spirit is *more ideal* than nature, whereas the absolute itself is the quantitative indifference between the two, i.e. equally real and ideal.²⁰⁸ What Fichte rejects is that the absolute can exist as *any form at all*, since such an absolute were not at all absolute.

In the first month of 1802 the last letters were exchanged. Schelling's answers to Fichte's critique of the notion of the absolute existing as a quantitative difference is missing. In a last attempt to explain his views to Schelling, Fichte makes the following points, repeating some of his earlier claims: There is agreement that in the absolute there is no quantity and no relation. Being and knowledge are always in relation and as far as one knows both, they have to be explained through something higher, which, however, also must be known.²⁰⁹ In relation to the absolute, Fichte claims that it is Schelling, and not himself, who does not go beyond reflection. Through a fundamental reflection (*GrundReflexe*), Fichte claims, it becomes clear that *thinking relativizes everything*, and that the *real absolute* must be *outside of thinking*. Fichte adds that the absolute can indeed have one, but only one, appearance, namely absolute knowledge, and tries to outbid Schelling in the negative description of it: “Das absolute *selbst* aber ist kein Seyn, noch ist es ein Wissen, noch ist es Identität, oder Indifferenz beider, sondern es ist eben – *das absolute* – und jedes zweite Wort ist vom Uebel.”²¹⁰ In stating that the absolute is a point of indifference is

205 GW III/5:86.

206 GW III/5:87.

207 GW III/5:91. A point originally made by Schelling in *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801).

208 Cf. Rang, Bernhard: *Identität und Indifferenz*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000, p. 65.

209 GW III/5:111.

210 GW III/5:112f.

according to the fundamental reflection to make the absolute into something, and Fichte finds that the absolute, as such, cannot be described in language in any way that is adequate. At most it can be seen as it appears in absolute knowledge.

In his last letter (dated January 25th), Schelling makes it clear that he has only claimed that the absolute as it *appears in intuition* is to be understood based on the notion of quantitative difference. The letter ends with Schelling stating that he hopes to be able to meet with Fichte personally in the spring. There are grounds for believing that Schelling met with Fichte, and that they could not reach an agreement. Both of them continue to raise objections against each other, but they never pick up any direct communication again. In the exchange it has been revealed that Fichte thinks that there is an absolute beyond thought, and he has introduced the notions of seeing and the immanent light, which are developed in his 1804-version of his *WL*. Both of them try to outbid each other as far as the inexpressibility of the absolute goes. For Schelling it is the coincidence of the real and the ideal in a way that is neither an identity, nor a difference, but rather an *indifference*, while for Fichte the absolute cannot be pinpointed by any word at all.

3.3 Schelling's Philosophy of Identity

Fichte's discussion with Schelling had revealed a deep divide between them. Fichte revealed that he considered the absolute as something completely beyond words and any form of description, while Schelling continued to seek ways to conceptualize the absolute and find an appropriate way to give a proper methodical foundation to his philosophy of nature to complement transcendental philosophy. The problem was also to find a way to relate the two, i.e. to find a point of identity that could bring them into unity.

In order to arrive at an objective conception of nature, i.e. one that does not contain a reference to a thinking subject that posits it, Schelling thought it possible to start with intellectual intuition, the self-positing or self-producing unity of the subjective and the objective, and then *abstract* from the subjective side of this unity.²¹¹ Then we would have before ourselves self-production in its objective form, which is nature. In one instance, Schelling restates his view that Fichte does not go beyond reflection, and that Schelling himself had led

211 SSW IV:88.

idealism into the standpoint of *production*.²¹² Still, Schelling had to account for the unity between transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature. The key to this was “[...] die ohne alle Beziehung schlechthin absolute intellektuelle Anschauung.” Furthermore, this was a standpoint that was “completely removed from the standpoint of reflection.”²¹³ In *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801) Schelling also attempted to follow a method modeled on geometrical deduction, inspired by Spinoza. Hegel would later, beginning with *PhG*, dismiss any attempts at using the geometrical method in philosophy (see 6.2[6]–[8]) though a critique of the geometrical, or synthetical, method would also become an integral part of the development of the method in *WdL* (see 9.3.1).

Schelling probed the depths of the idea of a standpoint beyond that of reflection in the book *Bruno oder über das natürliche und göttliche Prinzip der Dinge* (1802). The book is written as a dialogue and revolves around the question of the unity of some of the most typical and fundamental oppositions of philosophy, such as between the real and the ideal, between thinking and intuition, and the finite and the infinite. The problem, however, was this: The notion of a unity of opposites seems itself to be *opposed to opposition*. What Schelling was seeking was a way to think a unity of opposites that itself was not an instance of non-unity. Schelling’s point is that any unity of opposites that is established, made, or brought about from out of non-unity always will be an instance of a unity that is in opposition to the prior state of non-unity.²¹⁴ The result was his conception of *indifference*, which can be both and neither of the opposites. It is also an *original* unity.

Since this unity, the point of indifference, is beyond the grasp of thinking, it seems that Schelling in the end agrees with Fichte. Philosophy cannot free itself from the standpoint of reflection. With regards to the role reflection should have in the method of philosophy, Schelling is inconsistent, and he does not find a way to incorporate it into philosophical procedure.²¹⁵ He would

212 SSW IV:109.

213 SSW IV:113.

214 SSW IV:235ff. See also Rang, Bernhard: *Identität und Indifferenz*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann 2000. p. 13.

215 Compare the following statements: 1. “Von dieser absolute Methode, was man in der letzten Zeit die synthetische genannt hat, zwar das wahre, aber in der Reflexion auseinander gezogene Bild. Denn diese als einen Fortgang und in der Thesis, Anththesis und Synthesis auseinander vorgestellt, ist in der wahren Methode und in jeder ächten Konstruktion der Philosophie eins und ineinander.” 2. “Indem die Vernunft aufgefordert wird, das absolute weder als Denken noch als Seyn und doch zu denken, entsteht für die Reflexion ein Widerspruch, da für diese alles entweder ein Denken oder ein Seyn. Aber eben in diesem

continue to develop his notion of something beyond thinking, such as the “unprethinkable being,”²¹⁶ and would turn more and more to a realist conception of philosophy in the later stages of his career. Thus neither Fichte nor Schelling were able to completely free themselves from dogmatism, and their philosophies would therefore both be vulnerable to skeptical attacks.

3.4 Summary

Reinhold attempted to formulate a version of Kant’s transcendental philosophy that was systematic and scientific in character. This meant starting with a first principle and deducing the rest of the system from it. The problem is that the skeptic can simply continue to ask if the first principle is not a dogmatic assumption. If we appeal to self-evidence, or “immediate facts of consciousness,” the skeptic can simply go on to ask how we know that something is self-evident and how we know that we are not dealing with facts that just appear immediate.

This was not merely an imagined skeptical position, but rather one that was actively supported by philosophers such as Maimon.²¹⁷ Fichte’s answer to the skeptic was, firstly, to admit that first principles cannot be proved, but also, secondly, to introduce a *transcendental act* into the foundations of philosophy. We usually think of facts as something that does not involve us. This is the reason why we refer to them in order to find ground for truth – they are not subjective, i.e. not the result of wishful thinking or some other subjective influence. Fichte’s principle, however, concerns something that *is* because it is *done*.²¹⁸ And it is not just any action, but the action that is the necessary condition for the possibility of finite consciousness. That this action is inherently present in any state of finite consciousness is discovered through reflection on consciousness. Reflection makes the conditions of consciousness become apparent. What Fichte does is therefore to unite theoretical and practical

Widerspruch tritt die intellektuelle Anschauung und producirt das Absolute.” The second statement seems more Hegelian in nature than the first, and could very well be an expression of the influence of Hegel on Schelling. In any case, Schelling did not develop a method that would incorporate reflection into its procedure in the way Hegel did (an approach that he inherited from Fichte).

216 E.g. *ssw* XIV:342f.

217 Cf. Beiser, Frederick C.: *The Fate of Reason. German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard 1987, p. 317ff.

218 *FSW* I:460.

philosophy through a transcendental argument. Furthermore, when we take the whole of Fichte's procedure into account, what he develops is a way to move from differentiation to unity through reflection and intellectual intuition, and from unity to successive differentiations and unifications. This procedure branches out into theoretical and practical philosophy, and ends up with the infinite striving of finite consciousness, attempting to make its necessary other into its own. The not-I or the *Anstoß*, cannot be removed, however, as this would also mean the end of consciousness. Therefore Fichte ends with disunion. The not-I must be there as a "thing in itself."

Schelling tries to remedy this shortcoming by introducing the notions of conscious and unconscious productive activity; the former shows up as free action while the latter is a blind, world-producing force. These two activities, Schelling claims, are unified in artistic creation, which is therefore the end point of philosophy, i.e. where unity is reached. But this is only a way to unify transcendental philosophy. Since transcendental philosophy needs to be complimented by a philosophy of nature, the question of the unity of the system as a whole is left open. Schelling struggles with finding the appropriate way of approaching this unity, and ends up having to locate it beyond both thinking and being. The problem then becomes how to connect this beyond to the reflective thinking of the finite human being. Both transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature rest on a difference between thinking and being, each taking priority in the separate systems. It all boils down to how to connect difference and identity in unity in a way that does not introduce some revelatory moment of insight, since this would move philosophy into hands of the skeptics, if not into Jacobian anti-philosophy.

Hegel in Jena

In the following I will focus on Hegel's positioning of himself between Fichte and Schelling, his thoughts on logic and metaphysics as they are expressed in one of the system-drafts in Jena, and the determinate negation in *PhG*. Of the shorter well-known writings of Hegel in Jena, I am only going to treat the so-called *Differenzschrift*, leaving out both *Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie* and *Glauben und Wissen*. The *Differenzschrift* is important, because it shows the distinctiveness of Hegel's conception of the relation between unity and differentiation. What needs to be said of Hegel's approach to skepticism, including his approach to it in *Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie*, will be said in connection with the treatment of the determinate negation in *PhG*. In *Glauben und Wissen* Hegel positions himself against Jacobi's anti-philosophy, claiming that philosophy passes through the nothing that Jacobi warns against, but it does not present a clear idea of actually what this consists of. In the *Differenzschrift*, *Verhältnis des Skeptizismus zur Philosophie* and *Glauben und Wissen*, one can indeed find a notion of the task of philosophy as Hegel sees it, but he still has to develop a method. The task of philosophy is to find unity, and the true unity can only be found with a methodical procedure that provides an immanent connection of unity and differentiation. What I will argue, is that the structure of the particularly Hegelian procedure of such an immanent connection is evident in the Jena system-drafts, but that it is only in *PhG* that the determinate negation is placed at the center of it.

4.1 Hegel between Fichte and Schelling: Beyond Indifference

Hegel's philosophical debut was entitled *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen Systems der Philosophie* (1801). The topic was, as the title makes clear, Fichte's and Schelling's philosophies. At the time, the public knew of no real difference between Fichte and Schelling. Schelling was known as a follower of Fichte, not as someone who had developed a philosophy of his own. Hegel set out to show exactly what the difference between the two was. In doing this, he defines what the proper aim of philosophy is, but does not fully develop a method of how to realize this aim. Implicitly, he gives a characterization of his own philosophical position: Reflection and intellectual intuition (reason) can be combined to develop a comprehensive philosophical system.

This builds on methodical insights from Fichte's and Schelling's idea of a system of philosophy.

The disagreement between Fichte and Schelling led Schelling to posit an absolute beyond subject and object, i.e. the point of indifference. The origin of this development was Fichte's inability of providing a final unity to his system, which ended with infinite striving. Schelling responded with a philosophy of identity that provides a final unity between two complementary systems, transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature. Schelling had, however, not solved the problem of how to relate the absolute to reflective human cognition, which remained stuck in opposites. The absolute remained separate from thinking, resulting in a philosophy unable of conveying truth. As Hegel claims, the task of philosophy is to unify that which is separate ("die Entzweiung aufzuheben"²¹⁹). His answer to the problem of the relation of knowledge to the absolute is to understand the absolute as something that can be *produced for consciousness through reflection*.²²⁰

Since reflection limits the absolute, one is faced with contradiction.²²¹ Reflection proceeds by asking and identifying what something is. When reflection states that something is like this, it is implied that it is not like that (*determinare est ponere praedicatum cum exclusione oppositi*). Thus reflection presents limitations. It also presupposes a difference between subject and object. Through being an activity of limitation, reflection is fundamentally opposed to the nature of the absolute, which, traditionally, is beyond any form of relation.²²² Hegel suggests, however, that the absolute is "die Identität der Identität und der Nichtidentität; Entgegensetzen und Einssein ist zugleich in ihm."²²³ This is inconceivable according to the strict standards of traditional logic. Hegel now connects this to Kant's doctrine of the antinomies as contradictions that necessarily arise when thinking seeks to know the unconditioned: "Wenn man bloß auf das Formelle der Spekulation reflektiert und die Synthese

219 TWA 2:96.

220 TWA 2:30: "Aber das Absolute, weil es im Philosophieren von der Reflexion fürs Bewußtsein produziert wird, wird hierdurch eine objektive Totalität, ein Ganzes von Wissen, eine Organisation von Erkenntnissen. In dieser Organisation ist jeder Teil zugleich das Ganze, denn er besteht als Beziehung auf das Absolute."

221 TWA 2:25: "Das Absolute soll fürs Bewußtsein konstruiert werden, [das] ist die Aufgabe der Philosophie; da aber das Produzieren sowie die Produkte der Reflexion nur Beschränkungen sind, so ist dies ein Widerspruch."

222 Although Kant does not speak of the absolute, he comments on the meaning usually attached to it (in the form of the adjective "absolute") in *KrV*, B 380f.

223 TWA 2:96.

des Wissens in analytischer Form festhält, so ist die Antinomie, der sich selbst aufhebende Widerspruch, der höchste formelle Ausdruck des Wissens und der Wahrheit.”²²⁴ The absolute cannot be expressed in a sentence that expresses something that excludes its opposite, since the absolute is both identity and difference.

This implies a complete break with the idea that philosophy should start with a first principle. If the first sentence were a true sentence, one that contained the whole, it would be a contradiction.²²⁵ The understanding always opposes one determination to another; reason, however, “vereint diese Widersprechenden, setzt beide zugleich und hebt beide auf.”²²⁶ Reflection mediates between the abstract comparative concepts of the understanding (such as identity and difference) and the absolute as conceived by reason. This mediation is made possible through understanding separation as the appearance of the absolute.²²⁷ Reflection “fleshes out” the absolute,²²⁸ and when philosophy becomes the totality of knowledge fleshed out through reflection, it also becomes a system, “ein organisches Ganzes von Begriffen dessen höchstes Gesetz nicht der Verstand, sondern die Vernunft ist [...]”.²²⁹ This puts the absolute within the reach of human cognition.

Still, this is only an expression of the task. Philosophy is to construct the absolute before consciousness – but how? The notion of reflection as a mediator between the understanding and reason is vague. Reflection relies on but also moves us out of the fixity of the forms of the understanding. At some point reason is to take over when we get entangled in contradiction. This leaves the procedure open to skeptical attacks, since the resolution of contradiction is introduced from without. Hegel also seems unaware that his opposition of the understanding to reason (the former avoiding contradiction, the latter resolving contradiction) is itself indeed an opposition. The absolute is rather more adequately expressed by reflection, which can mediate between the fundamental opposition of reason and understanding. Reason is not bound by the sharp opposition of identity and non-identity. *It can even mediate between the identity of difference and identity and the difference between the two.* This is a problem that troubled Schelling and made him push the absolute into the beyond. It also lead Hegel later to the development of a completely

²²⁴ TWA 2:39.

²²⁵ TWA 2:37.

²²⁶ TWA 2:36.

²²⁷ TWA 2:25.

²²⁸ Cf. TWA 2:112.

²²⁹ TWA 2:35f., see also TWA 2:30.

processual understanding of the determinations of pure thinking, as I will argue in the second part of this study.

With the idea of an internally differentiated absolute that appears through reflection, Hegel had moved beyond Schelling's conception of the identity of transcendental philosophy and the philosophy of nature. This would later lead to the well-known break between Hegel and Schelling. This started when Hegel in *PhG* ridicules the conception of the absolute that is not internally differentiated, which he famously calls a "night in which all cows are black." Schelling takes this as a direct attack on his own philosophy, and whether or not Hegel intended it, this does strike at the center of Schelling's – and Fichte's too for that matter – conception of the absolute.

What Hegel had formulated as a task in the *Differenzschrift* still had to be fully realized. He had to develop a form of thinking that unites the understanding with reason through reflection, producing a system of knowledge that contains and expresses the whole of its fundamental determinations both in their differentiation, i.e. opposition, and their unity.

4.2 Outlines of a System: From the Finite to the Infinite

The drafts Hegel made of his system in Jena are of special interest for a genealogical investigation of Hegel's conception of the determinate negation. These manuscripts were never published by Hegel, but contain the first general outline and systematic presentation of Hegel's logic and metaphysics. One manuscript is of particular interest, namely the *Systementwürfe II (SII)*. This manuscript is almost complete and contains the first two references to a "determinate negation" in Hegel's work, the first in the part on metaphysics and the second in the philosophy of nature.

The *SII*-manuscript gives both a good representation of how Hegel developed his idea of immanently relating the determinations of his logic and metaphysics, and presents us with the context in which the determinate negation is introduced. The sequence of logic Hegel presents here follows only roughly the pattern of Hegel's mature logical system. If we look at the sequence of concepts in the manuscript, Hegel starts with categories of what later belongs to the logic of being: *Quality*, *quantity* and *infinity* (note that *infinity* later becomes a part of quality in *WdL*). This is followed by some determinations that correspond to the logic of essence in *WdL*: *Substance*, *causality* and *reciprocity*. Finally, there is some correspondence to the determinations of the doctrine of the concept in *WdL* (*concept*, *judgment*, *inference*, *definition* and *knowledge*).

What is striking is that Hegel infuses the development of the concepts with dialectics. An obvious question is how this dialectical procedure compares to his later version of it. Some remarks on this will be made in what follows, but the focus will be on what is relevant in relation to the development of the conception of the determinate negation. I will not be undertaking a general interpretation of this work and how it relates to Hegel's philosophy as a whole. Such a task would be exhausting; the style of the manuscript is very unforgiving and often requires that one entertains a number of alternative interpretations at the same time, with no obvious way of deciding which one is right. This is true not only on the level of the manuscript as a whole, but also on the sentence-for-sentence level. This will provide some difficulties, particularly when it comes to the interpretation of the passage in which the determinate negation is referred to.

There are certain parts and passages in the manuscript that are especially interesting when tracing the genesis of Hegel's conception of the determinate negation: (1) The treatment of the concept of *limit*, which may be an example of a connection of dialectics with Kant's thoughts of limit as a unity of reality and negation. (2) The treatment of the category of infinity, where negation receives an explicitly positive or affirmative side, essentially fulfilling the notion of immanent connection. (3) The part where the elements of the logical exposition of concepts are explicitly treated in relation to knowledge, definition and proof (an early version of Hegel's early notion of a dialectical method). (4) The metaphysics of subjectivity, where the term *determinate negation*, to my knowledge, is used for the first time. Special attention will be paid to the question of how the determinate negation is primarily to be understood as a *unity of opposites* or *one element of an opposed pair*.

In what follows I will try to connect these four points. I will do this by showing how the treatment of the category of infinity is connected to Hegel's idea of methodical dialectics, and how this specific way of doing philosophy is expressed in Hegel's treatment of the metaphysics of subjectivity. Here I will look in particular into what the determinate negation means in relation to the theoretical I (consciousness). The interpretation of points (1)–(3) will create the framework for considering point (4). This will then make it possible to decide whether the determinate negation connects with and fits into the underlying methodological idea of moving from negativity to affirmation and unity or, as could also be the case, the determinate negation can on some finer points be distinguished from the methodological idea.

A word of warning: Not only is the manuscript difficult to interpret because of the dense and unclear language, the ideas that are presented in it are also in themselves very demanding. I can only give an assurance that insofar one is

able to take “die Anstrengung des Begriffs” upon oneself, the ideas will start to make sense. The key to understanding Hegel’s contribution to the post-Kantian discourse, I believe, lies in understanding the depths of the conceptual movements he presents throughout the logic. This is the only way to go beyond abstract statements such as that the speculative consists of “the unity of difference and unity” or “identity of difference and identity,” and to give an answer to the objection that any speculative unity is opposed to non-opposition and that it is therefore impossible to give a truthful expression of the truth.

4.2.1 *From the Finite to the Infinite*

The manuscript has not been handed down in a complete form. The first few pages are missing. It jumps directly into what is most likely a critique of Fichte.²³⁰ Insofar as we understand *limit* (*Gränzte*) as something insubstantial, as something that simply gets posited when reality and negation is posited, then limit is a determination that belongs to the logic of the understanding.²³¹ Idealistic philosophies, such as Fichte’s, posit a determining activity (the I) that is no more real than its counter-activity (the not-I or *Anstoß*). Their unification becomes impossible so long as they are understood as fundamentally opposite in a way that means that the opposition cannot be overcome. But Hegel does not set out to unify them through some external mediating substance. He seeks rather to reconceive the determination of limit dialectically, which then starts right in the middle of the opposed forces.

Furthermore, that the determination of *limit* stands under the heading of quality gives us a clue that there might be a relation to Kant’s table of categories, which also puts limit under quality.²³² However, since the first few pages are missing one can only conjecture that the missing pages consisted of a treatment of the categories *reality* and *negation*.²³³ It is very tempting to claim that this is the first connection of Kant’s suggestion of a unity of two categories in a third to Hegel’s development of a method of philosophy originally inspired by Fichte. Since the pages are missing, we cannot do this with full confidence. However, since there are references to reality and negation and the way they are united in *limit*, we have some reason to believe that Hegel has Kant’s table

230 Cf. Harris, H.S.: *Hegel’s Development. Night Thoughts* (Jena 1801–1806), Oxford: Oxford University Press 1983, p. 348f.

231 GW 7:3f.=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 3f.

232 B 106.

233 Cf. Baum, Manfred: *Die Entstehung der Hegelschen Dialektik*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1986, p. 236.

of categories in mind here.²³⁴ Furthermore, since Hegel proceeds through reflection on the determinations and connects them through reflection, it is likely that he is attempting to develop his version of a philosophical method inspired by Fichte.

In order to understand the movement of the concept of limit in relation to reality and negation we need at least a basic concept of reality and negation as related to quality. I will suggest the following as sufficient: Quality as reality is the immediate presence of something, something that has a negation, something that it is not, such that this reality only is insofar as there is something opposed to it; a reality is *limited* by its negation. Hegel states: "In der Gränze ist das Nichts der Realität und der Negation gesetzt und das Seyn derselben ausser diesem Nichts; [...]." ²³⁵ Where the limit is, both reality and the negation are not; the being, the presence, inherent in both reality and negation is only insofar as they are outside of the limit. The reality of the limit is that it is the negation of both reality and its negation. In itself, *limit* therefore combines both reality and negation. This makes limit a concept that *relates to itself* in a way that I will now try to explain.

The concept of self-relation is easy to grasp in principle, but difficult to understand in its full depth. When I think about an object external to me, I am related to something other than myself. When I think about myself, I am relating to myself. The difficulties begin when we try to uncover the conceptual structures that make such a relation possible. How can something be both the object and that which directs itself towards the object? What we are looking for is a speculative concept, one that unifies difference and identity: When I am conscious of myself, I am both *different* and identical to *myself*. One can and also cannot differentiate between the intentional subject and the intentional object. In self-consciousness, the object of awareness is the same as the one having awareness, but unless there is a minimal difference between the two, there can be no distinct awareness. In order to account for the transcendental conditions for the possibility of the fact of self-consciousness, we need proper speculative concepts.

234 It should be noted that the table of categories lists *Limitation* under *der Qualität*, while Hegel speaks of *Gränze*. However, this is not very significant, since Hegel simply preferred German words and also because his presentation of *Gränze* follows Kant's use of *Limitation*, in particular with regards to the notion of *Limitation* as a unity of *Realität* and *Negation*.

235 GW 7:5=Hegel, G.W.F: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 3.

It makes perfect sense to ask what the concept of a concept is. Any formulation of what the concept of a concept is will be a formulation of a self-relation of the concept. What is to be specified is to be fully present in the specification, which then cannot be just some part or aspect of it. Concepts are always *about* something, and with the concept of the concept, we have something that is intended to fully specify itself. Concepts can also be self-related through *other* concepts and still be about themselves in such a relation; one can ask about the specific nature, the quality, of the concept of limit.

When specifying what the quality of limit is, the specification of the quality will in principle be a situation where the concept of limit is about itself even when specified through another concept, but nonetheless a concept that it plainly also is not, for at first it seems to make more sense to say that limit is *not* quality, than that limit has a quality. Thus, when limit is to have a quality, the specification of the quality must somehow imply a return to the concept of limit as it is in itself, as something that is neither quality nor negation, but that which holds them apart and lets them be what they are on their own.

According to Hegel, as far as the limit is a self-relation, it is *true quality*, implying that reality and negation, and *limit* insofar as it is not self-related, is not true quality.²³⁶ This gives us reason to believe that Hegel has in mind a development of quality through untrue versions of it into its true form. In order to be self-related, *limit* must return to itself from its opposite, its negation. This means that a limit, in order to be something itself, must be a negation of what it is a limit of (reality and negation). *Limit* is both limited and defined through its relation to reality and negation; it is a negation of both and has its *reality* exactly through negating a reality and its negation. Thus limit is itself both reality and negation. First limit is that which separates reality and negation. Then, in order to specify the reality of limit itself and find out how it is related to itself, one needs to relate it to what it is opposed to and then negate the opposition. Limit is a negation of reality, but also a negation of negation – it is thus opposed to both (negates both), and yet still relates to both, in the sense that it has its reality through the negation of negation and reality – this is the reality of limit, and so it is also something positive. However, in order to have subsistence limit negates only what is other to it in relation to itself – it is only when the question is what limit itself is that it must negate negation and reality. When limit is what lies between reality and negation, when these two concepts stand in the foreground,

236 GW 7:6=Hegel, G.W.F: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 6. That reality and negation are also *untrue quality* can of course only be claimed under the condition that the manuscript actually contained these determinations under the heading of quality.

their limit is what gives them subsistence; limit lets them be without negating them. When limit comes to the foreground, however, it makes reality and negation into parts of itself and defines itself through being a synthesis of both.²³⁷

Limit is a unity of opposites, of negation and reality. Insofar as it is both a negation of two preceding determinations as well as a new determination, it shares central characteristics with the concept of the determinate negation that will emerge later on. Still, we must keep in mind that we do not have definite proof that the preceding determinations actually are reality and negation and we therefore have to withhold a definite and final judgment about this issue. Still, since Hegel indeed unites reality and negation in the determination of limit, he (most likely knowingly) follows Kant's suggestion that "[...] die *Einschränkung* nichts anders ist als Realität mit Negation verbunden."²³⁸ Kant did not say anything explicitly about this connection, however, and left the field open for exploration with regards to how to account for the connection. Fichte had brought reality and negation in connection with each other, but had not unified them, which left his system incomplete with regards to unity. There always remains a limit between the I and the not-I; the one posits the other, and their unity can only be something to strive for. Hegel's unification of reality and negation in limit can therefore be seen as the origin of true dialectical unification.²³⁹

Even though we know something of the way Hegel conceives the connection of reality and negation, we cannot follow the whole movement from reality and negation to limitation, and therefore we can say little of the actual methodical procedure. However, something can be said based on Hegel's comments on what is actually going on as the determinations develop:

Die Qualität wird in der Gränze dasjenige, was sie ihrem absoluten Wesen nach ist, was sie aber ihrem Begriffe (gesetzten Wesen) nach nicht seyn soll, und worein zugleich ihr Begriff übergehen muß, indem er gesetzt wird als das, was er seyn soll; die Gränze ist hiemit die Totalität oder wahrhaftte Realität, die mit ihrem Begriffe verglichen zugleich seine Dialektik enthält, indem er darin so sich aufhob, daß er das Gegentheil seiner selbst geworden ist [...].²⁴⁰

237 GW 7:6=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 6.

238 B III.

239 This is argued at length in Kwade, Anne-Kristina: *Grenze. Hegels "Grenz"-Begriff 1804/05 als Keimzelle der Dialektik*, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000.

240 GW 7:6f.=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 6.

Hegel distinguishes between absolute essence and concept, between *Wesen* and *gesetzten Wesen*. I believe it is in this distinction that Hegel sees the root of the actual progression from one concept to another in his attempt at formulating a dialectical logic in the Jena period. Hegel goes on to claim that because the way limit is developed does not correspond to the concept of quality, quality passes over into quantity. As quality becomes negation it ceases to be what it is according to its concept; a negation is only “insofern ein anderes nicht ist; der Begriff der Qualität aber ist, nur sich selbst gleich zu seyn, ohne die Rücksicht auf ein anderes.”²⁴¹ Here Hegel speaks of quality (reality) in the traditional sense that it is an affirmative being that is what it is without a relation to something else. Quality as reality is brought “out of its concept” through the dialectical insight that something is a reality only by having a negation. Quality was, according to its concept, “eine wahrhaft beziehungslose Bestimmtheit,”²⁴² but turns out to be, as reality, necessarily related to negation. Because quality is not what it was supposed to be according to its concept, it becomes quantity. The reason for the further progression is therefore the disharmony between the concept of quality and its development. Although Hegel does refer to limit as true quality, it also becomes clear that limit does not really (or fully) correspond to the concept of quality. The reason for the progression is therefore that the development has not fully returned to its origin. As far as I can tell, the development here is therefore not fully immanent. It relies on a comparison between an original standard that is regarded as well defined (presupposed) and a specific object (determination).

As the manuscript progresses it becomes clear that Hegel incorporates other parts of Kant's table of categories into his logic. The determination *Quantität* contains *Numerisches Eins*, *Vielheit des numerischen Eins*, and *Allheit*. In Kant's table we have *Einheit*, *Vielheit*, and *Allheit*. However, Hegel introduces *Unendlichkeit*, which does not appear in Kant's table. As *Unendlichkeit* proceeds to *Das Verhältnis*, however, Hegel returns to Kant's table, describing *Das Substantialitäts=Verhältnis*, *Kausalitätsverhältnis* and *Wechselwirkung*. When treating the relationship of thinking, Hegel develops a version of traditional logic, beginning with the concept, and then proceeding to judgment and inference. It appears that Kant's categories of modality are missing, but Hegel has made these categories part of the determinations of relation. Towards the end of the logic, Hegel treats definition, division and knowledge. This follows Kant

241 GW 7:6=Hegel, G Hegel, G.W.F: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 6.

242 GW 7:7=Hegel, G.W.F: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 7.

by including a *Methodenlehre* in the logic.²⁴³ Before turning to the method, we will look into Hegel's treatment of infinity, both because it is unique to his logic and because it gives us an opportunity to follow the development of a determination from its beginning to its end.

The determination of infinity proceeds from bad infinity to true infinity.²⁴⁴ With the concept of bad infinity we have reached the last stage of the inability of unifying opposition absolutely "indem sie [die Unfähigkeit, T.S.] nur die Foderung dieses Aufhebens aufstellt, und sich an der Darstellung der Foderung begnügt, statt sie zu erfüllen; [...]"²⁴⁵ I understand this to mean that in the development of the categories of quantity and quality one compares the dialectical movement of the concepts to the original, finite, definition, which gives rise to a contradiction and then moves the development ahead. What is important is that before the determination of infinity is established, contradiction is recognized through comparing conceptual determination to a presupposed standard; such a process is not immanent. The transition from the finite to the infinite explicitly happens through that negation (or emptiness or freedom) is *made* positive.²⁴⁶ Bad infinity is caught in the contradiction of forever drawing a limit and transcending it. When attempting to proceed to infinity, one must always stop somewhere and posit an empty beyond, which means that the infinity in this sense is actually limited, or has determinateness in relation to this emptiness. It could not be without this emptiness, something outside of the process of drawing a limit and transcending it. What bad infinity tries to reach in limiting and transcending is already there as the emptiness, which is the ground for the determinateness of bad infinity.

When bad infinity is released into this emptiness one can form the concept of true infinity. Emptiness as the negation of bad infinity is a condition of there being a bad infinite, and the true infinite would have to unite with the emptiness beyond the bad infinite. When the bad infinite is united with emptiness – when it has finitude in it, as an appearance of an other which immediately is an expression of itself – it becomes truly infinite.

243 E.g., the second part of the *Jäsche-Logik* is *Allgemeine Methodenlehre*, which treats definition, division and method in this order.

244 This is not explicitly stated in the *SW*-manuscript, but follows from the presentation. Cf. Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1967, pp. 28–30=GW 7:30–33.

245 GW 7:32=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 31.

246 GW 7:33=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 32.

The concept of the true infinite presents an absolute contradiction;²⁴⁷ the true nature of the finite is that it is infinite, or it is absolute unrest, i.e., as Hegel states, never being what it is.²⁴⁸ In the true infinite, something has become one with its other, is only its other, but since the other is only itself, it is the “*duplicis negationis*, die wieder *affirmatio* ist.”²⁴⁹ The infinite was really what was implicit in the preceeding concepts, it was what brought the movement about. It arose, but not fully, not explicitly (as “gesetzt”). When it explicitly arises from bad infinity, one can explain the foregoing concepts as *ideal* (in the sense of abstract) and since it was not possible to explain them fully as being in their other – they were infinite, but not infinity itself.²⁵⁰

From the determination of infinity Hegel proceeds to determinations that are explicitly relational. At this point the exposition becomes less dialectical, and Hegel is no longer concerned with the discrepancies between the definition of a concept and its development. The determinations of relationship are explicitly only what they are in relation to an other (a cause is only a cause insofar as there is an effect).²⁵¹ In the case of the determinations of reality and negation, this has to be developed. Hegel therefore breaks with the metaphysical tradition that teaches that realities have affirmative content of their own and are non-relational.

4.2.2 *The Concept of the Method in Systementwürfe II*

In Hegel's treatment of knowledge in *SI*, it becomes clear that the previous exposition was something that happened through: “*unsere Reflexion; eine dialektische Behandlung*, die die Gegensätze entwickelte, welche in dem gesetzten

247 GW 7:33=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 33.

248 GW 7:33=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 33.

249 GW 7:34=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 33.

250 GW 7:35=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 34.

251 When describing the pair-relationship of the determinations of causality and the way they necessarily relate to each other, Hegel notes that: “In dieser Häuffung der Widersprüche ist jedes Moment nur, indem es festgehalten wird, ehe es in sein Gegentheil übergeht, aber indem es so festhalten nur ist als bezogen auf sein Gegentheil, so ist sein Bestimmen als ein festgehalteneyn, selbst die Darstellung seines in sein Gegentheil übergegangeneyns.” GW 7:44f.=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 45f.

unentwickelt vorhanden waren; [...].”²⁵² The concepts are in themselves dead, they are without movement. Their connection lies outside of them. And it is knowledge that brings about movement and connection.

The movement of knowledge starts with the concept in its fixed definition, proceeds to a construction (exposition) of this concept as becoming the other of itself, before it returns to itself and is subsumed under the first unity, i.e. the concept as first defined. The crucial aspect of this is that the first unity has its separation as a part of itself, such that when it is moved out of itself, it is actually becoming more fully what it is, because “ihr vielmehr die Beziehung wesentlich sey.”²⁵³ This makes a positive result possible; the separation of the concept from itself is shown to be a part of itself.

We can ask whether we find a notion of a determinate negation enmeshed in the exposition. The following passage seems to be as close as one gets to a methodical idea that corresponds to the determinate negation (here in the sense of a speculative unity of oppositions, see 10.1 and 6.2) in this work:

Diese Bewegung des Erkennens ist bisher immer das Darstellen eines Begriffes als Realität oder Totalität gewesen. Die erste Potenz war der Begriff oder die Definition selbst, die zweyte die Konstruktion desselben oder die Darstellung desselben als schlechter Realität, sein Ausser-sichkommen oder sein Anderswerden, und das dritte die wahrhaftige Realität oder die Totalität, das Moment des Aufhebens dieses Anderswerden[s] durch die Subsumption desselben unter die erste Einheit. An der ersten Einheit wurde aufgezeigt, daß sie in der That eine Trennung in sich habe, – gegen diese Trennung, daß ihr vielmehr die Beziehung wesentlich sey. Das negative Kehren des Trennens gegen die Einheit, der Einheit gegen das Trennen wird positives Resultat in der Realität, die beydes zusammenschließt, dadurch daß sie Allgemeines, in sich selbst reflectirtes, Definition ist, in welcher die erste und [zweyte] Potenz nicht nichts sind, sondern als aufgehobenes oder als ideelle gesetzt sind.²⁵⁴

Hegel is here providing a new way of conceiving what unity means. On the one hand, an original unity has separation in it, on the other, it has connection

²⁵² GW 7:111=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 117.

²⁵³ GW 7:113=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 119.

²⁵⁴ GW 7:113f.=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 119.

(*Beziehung*). The original unity separates into an opposition, but this opposition is the true realization of the original unity. The separation and connection therefore do not work against each other, but give rise to a new unity that brings the opposition together, not by removing them completely, but by making them ideal.

This could be interpreted to mean that Hegel here indeed conceives of a speculative unity in the same sense as in his mature logic, where, for instance, *being* and *nothing* are contained in *becoming* as coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be. This interpretation is, however, problematic. We can accept that Hegel's concept of infinity as it is developed in the manuscript is in fact a completely dialectical concept and contains an outline of his mature dialectics.²⁵⁵ There is no doubt that the similarities with the later dialectics are striking. However, I believe that the realization of unity in the manuscript is not a matter of an integration of the preceding moments, but a complete disappearing of difference. When we move from the logic to metaphysics and understand knowledge as a set of principles, we reach a domain that is "der Dialektik entnommen."²⁵⁶ In the law of identity, $A=A$, difference disappears; the law refers to *two* A's, but states that "die Verschiedenheit, diß Anders unmittelbar nicht ist."²⁵⁷ Therefore, in *SH*, metaphysics follows the laws of the understanding, while the logic and the dialectics stand in closer to Hegel's later conception of dialectics and reason.

4.2.3 *The Determinate Negation and the Connection of Knowledge to Life*

We now arrive at the first explicit mention of the term "determinate negation" in Hegel's works. Since the term appears within the metaphysics as it is presented in the manuscript, and we already know that dialectics does not figure in the metaphysics in the way it did in the logic, we can expect that the determinate negation as it is used here is not a significant methodical concept as far the understanding of dialectics goes. The term appears within the discussion of the theoretical I, and I will start with an exposition of the ideas that Hegel is presenting here. This is necessary in order to be able to get a clear notion of the way Hegel uses the determinate negation here.

255 See Baum, Manfred: "Methode der Logik und Metaphysik," in: *Hegel in Jena*, Dieter Henrich, Klaus Düsing (eds.), Bonn: Bouvier Verlag 1980, p. 136.

256 GW 7:131=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 138.

257 GW 7:130=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 137f.

The metaphysics of the manuscript is divided into the already mentioned knowledge as a system of first principles, the metaphysics of objectivity and the metaphysics of subjectivity. The second part contains the objects of the traditional *metaphysica specialis*, and the third part treats the theoretical I (consciousness), practical I and absolute spirit. Even though the metaphysics is separate from the logic, the determinations of the logic keep informing the exposition of the metaphysics. When Hegel begins treating the traditional objects of metaphysics he tries to connect them through letting the exposition be informed by the earlier developmental structures that revealed themselves in the logic. This allows Hegel to recast the way the metaphysical objects are conceived. He runs the risk, however, of reducing the objects of metaphysics to purely conceptual relationships. Still, this is a challenge to Kant, since Hegel has found a new way to treat the objects of metaphysics. This new way operates with a non-traditional concept of truth, understanding truth as independent of sensuous intuition. Furthermore, he needs to connect theoretical philosophy with practical philosophy in order to provide full unity to the system. His suggestion is to connect knowledge to life and here the notion of a determinate negation plays an important role.

In the context of his presentation of the theoretical I in the metaphysics of subjectivity Hegel states:

Wesentlich ist Ich nur absolut allgemeine Einzelheit, daß die Einzelheit aus der Welt zurückgekehrt ist, nur als ein reflectirtes; und die Gattung als Einzelheit ist ebendadurch selbst eine bestimmte Negation des Bestimmten, und selbst bestimmt. Ich als unendlich, das sich zum Gegentheil seiner selbst wird, wird es als ein ursprünglich bestimmtes; d. h. als eines, das eine bestimmte Uendlichkeit ist; obzwar Reflexion und Negation, ist es ein Theil der Welt, ein in negirter Form gesetzter Theil, aber darum ein bestimmtes Negatives.²⁵⁸

Here we have a reference to “eine bestimmte Negation” and “ein bestimmtes Negatives.” The question is whether they have the same meaning. I think they do not, as I will now argue.

Hegel speaks of the I in two forms here, first as the I that has come out of the world, and then as the I that is a part of the world although it is also separate from it. The first is a finite I, the second is an infinite I. Hegel follows Fichte in the exposition of the finite (theoretical) I. Whatever is opposed to it is a not-I

²⁵⁸ GW 7:159=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 168.

that the I itself has posited as such. It is therefore not really in opposition to it. That which is opposed to the I needs to have some subsistence of its own, or else the I would become just as unreal as the chimeric other.²⁵⁹ This was a problem that Fichte had identified in his *wL*, and which is the realist aspect of his idealism. The not-I cannot be defined exclusively through what it is not. It must have a source outside of the I, or else the I will itself have no reality. The I stands in a real opposition to the not-I; increasing one means increasing the other, but each side must also have a reality separate from the relationship of real opposition.

What Hegel refers to as the *Gattung als Einzelheit* is *humanity*.²⁶⁰ This is Hegel's answer to the necessity of having something that functions as a real opposition to the I, something that is both a negation as well as something that has a reality of its own. It therefore makes the reference to a thing in itself or an *Anstoß* as something that forever remains outside the process of human knowledge obsolete.²⁶¹ Humanity is a singularity that does not remove itself from the world, but remains a part of it as the process of life, and is, furthermore, like the I, a singular, "das durch seine Allgemeinheit hindurch sein Seyn durch Entgegensetzung an sich trägt."²⁶² When speaking of the opposition that is contained in humanity and is the source of its reproduction, Hegel presumably has in mind the opposition of the sexes.²⁶³ This is the singularity that can really

259 This is how I interpret the following from Hegel, GW 7:159=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 168: „Das Ich, auf diese Wiese in sich reflectirte Gattung, in seiner Einzelheit absolut Allgemeines, hat das Fremde schlechthin nur als ein Allgemeines gegen sich. Aber so ist diß entgegengesetzte in der That nur aufgehoben, es ist nicht ein entgegengesetztes; daß an ihm selbst der Gegensatz sey, muß als allgemein bezeichnete, das Ideelle, selbst zugleich ein Bestimmtes oder ein dem Ich entgegengesetztes seyn und eine Seite haben, von welcher es nicht durch Ich bestimmt oder ihm nicht gleich ist [...]“

260 Cf. GW 7:148=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 156: „[...] der Weltproceß ist der Gattungsproceß, welche, als Ganzes in ihren Momente bleibend, sie different gegeneinander setzt und in ihnen existirt.“ Note that by the term “humanity” I am refering to the genus of all human beings that develop through nature, i.e. not the ideal of humanity *in* the human being, such at is developed by Kant (see e.g. *KpV*, AA V:87).

261 The *Anstoß*, however, becomes fully known as it is part of the process of self-knowledge, cf. GW 7:160=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 170.

262 GW 7:159=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 168.

263 Cf. GW 7:146=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 155: „[...] die Gattung reißt sich in die

oppose the I as a determinate negation. In humanity, the I sees a singularity that is equal to itself with regards to its power of self-determination. And it is not something that is separated from the world, but belongs to the natural order. Hence, for Hegel, the not-I in its reality is therefore humanity.

Humanity is a determinate negation because (*ebendadurch*) the I has separated itself from the real world process. Both are singular entities capable of creating their own cycle of reality; the I as the cycle of a relation to a not-I (reciprocal determination), humanity as the cycle of reproduction. The theoretical I determines itself as opposite to humanity as such, one singular being over against the whole. Humanity is therefore a negation of the I. But it is not only a *negation* of the I, i.e. a not-I. It is a self-determining singular being, and it brings a being such as the I out of itself. It therefore provides an opposition to the I. The determinate nature of humanity is such that it cannot be reduced to something that fundamentally has its source in the I itself. Humanity as the I-producing singularity determines the I from the side of life and therefore poses a challenge to the theoretical I. Through humanity the I acquires real opposition and therefore also real being. This is the way in which humanity is a *determinate negation*.

Now we turn to the meaning of *ein bestimmtes Negatives*, which concerns the infinite I. That which makes the infinite I into a determinate negative is that it is *a part of the world that is posited in a negated form* (“[das Ich] ist ein Theil der Welt, ein in negirter Form gesetzter Teil, aber darum ein bestimmtes Negatives”). The infinite I is the universal consciousness of humanity. As humanity it is a part of the world, but as a singular, universal consciousness it is “Reflexion und Negation”; the infinite I opposes itself to the world as it reflects upon its own process of becoming in the world. In this way it is a negation of the world, but it is only a negation *in form* – it really is an extension of the world. The world that knows its own being is, however, more than the process of reproduction. It is the world as the I, the I that is conscious of itself as a part of the world, and therefore has determinate content. Therefore, I propose,

Geschlechtsdifferenz auseinander aus dem Erkennen in das Anerkennen.“; GW 7:148=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 156f.: “Das Erkennen als sein Begriff ist Seele; dieselbe als diese Bestimmtheit des Begriffes ist selbst einzelnes, das sich so in sich reflectirend zur Gattung wird. Diese ebenso sich realisirend ist Entzweyung in Geschlechter, Existenz der natürlichen Dinge und Erhaltung der Gattung [...]”; GW 7:156=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 165: „Für uns ist der gleichgültige Gegensatz, der in der Selbsterhaltung bleibt, und der Gegensatz der Gattung in den Geschlechtern dasselbe [...]“.

what Hegel means with the infinite I being “ein bestimmtes Negatives” is something that is outside of the world (i.e. a negation of the world, “Reflexion und Negation”) but is still in the world (“ein Teil der Welt,” as reproduction and humanity). As that which recognizes itself as both in and outside of the world, it is therefore something infinite and highly determinate.

Hence the way Hegel uses “bestimmte Negation” and “bestimmtes Negatives” in this context cannot be equated. The first concerns the relationship of humanity to finite consciousness and the second concerns the relationship of infinite consciousness to the world. On an abstract level they are similar in that both expressions are used to refer to something that is a negation as well as something that has a particular content of its own and is not simply an empty negation. On a more concrete level they are different. The determinate negation is *humanity* and functions as a self-determined not-I. It presents finite consciousness with the necessary determinate opposite that it needs in order for itself to be determined. The determinate negative is the infinite I determined as an extension of the world, being both in it and outside of it.

These notions allow us to understand how something can be both different from and deeply connected to the same thing. Through such an understanding Hegel develops his own answer to the infinite striving of the practical I in Fichte. The theoretical I recognizes (knows) itself as fundamentally one with the process of the world, but this recognition must now be realized in the world. Hegel is not specific as to what this realization consists of, but he reveals that it must be a process that involves sociality.²⁶⁴ What is important for us is that Hegel proposes a *truly infinite* way of relating the I to itself. The I finds a process that begets life, humanity and self-conscious beings; as a self-conscious being the I is this process itself: “Dieses, daß Ich nur ist als ein sich findendes, nicht getrennt, etwa vorher, als es sich gefunden hat, sondern daß es diß Finden seiner selbst [ist], diß ist seine absolute Unendlichkeit; [...]”²⁶⁵ The I, or spirit, is only insofar as it is *finding itself*. This requires a relative independence of consciousness from humanity, which has produced and shaped it. The practical I is the I that has not found itself.²⁶⁶ As it finds itself and presents

264 GW 7:164=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 173: „Ein einzelnes Ich gehört ganz der Hypothese des Weltprocesses an, in welcher viele einzelne Ich oder ebenso eine Vielheit Ansichseiner, in sich reflectirter, wechselseitig Passiver und thätiger auftreten.“

265 GW 7:164=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 174.

266 GW 7:164=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 174: „[...] und der Gegensatz des praktischen Ich ist allein der, daß es sich diß ist, das sich noch nicht gefunden hätte; [...]“

this finding to itself in the world that has produced it, it becomes absolute spirit (which is what Hegel later identifies with *art*, *religion* and *philosophy* as *Wissenschaft*). The content of absolute spirit consists of, characteristically, a review of the process of its becoming; absolute spirit has its own being as its content.

This wholly processual understanding of the I results in a changed attitude towards the transcendent: "Die Sehnsucht nach Unsterblichkeit und das Jenseits des höchsten Wesens ist ein Rückgang des Geistes in eine niedrige Sphäre, denn er ist an ihm selbst unsterblich und höchstes Wesen."²⁶⁷ Still, absolute spirit for Hegel at this stage in his development is something much more than sociality and human culture. Like Schelling, he believes that a system of philosophy needs a philosophy of nature, which is to explain the objective side of the development of spirit. After his treatment of metaphysics in the manuscript, Hegel proceeds to the philosophy of nature. Here he presents nature as "ruhige, bestimmungslose seelige Geist," "reine unbewegte Ruhe, das aus oder vielmehr in der Bewegung in sich Zurückgekehrte, der absolute Grund und Wesen aller Dinge [...]"²⁶⁸ As such it is "[...] der Äther oder die *absolute Materie*, das absolut Elastische, jede Form Verschmähende, sowie ebendarum das absolut Weiche und jede Form sich Gebende und Ausdrückende."²⁶⁹ Furthermore, this ether is simple self-identity, which, as it differentiates itself and realizes itself, becomes the *living God* that recognizes and knows itself as itself in its other.²⁷⁰ What Hegel is presenting is therefore a conception of a God that is realizing itself immanently.

He also presents us with two important ways of approaching the problem of the unity of a philosophical system. The first is that he formulates an idea of the infinite I that unites theoretical and practical philosophy through bringing them into a relationship of true infinity. This relationship consists of a form of knowledge that is not one-sidedly theoretical, but as a process that is a natural extension of the world. The whole cosmos is a process of self-knowledge, of a being that recognizes that it exists and discovers the conditions of its own existence as well as the development of this existence. The conceptual framework

267 GW 7:171=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 181.

268 GW 7:188=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 200.

269 GW 7:188=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 200.

270 GW 7:188=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 201.

for such an understanding of spirit is provided by the logic and metaphysics of Jena. This framework is complemented by a philosophy of nature, which explains how we, supported by natural science, traditional theories of nature (such as that of the elements) and a dialectical logic, can conceive the process of self-knowledge as realizing itself through nature.

Hegel continued to make changes to his Jena system. It is safe to say that the mature system was more modest and less metaphysical. First of all, Hegel makes his logic thoroughly dialectical, and includes the first principles in the logic of reflection, where they are no longer exempt from dialectics. Secondly, he also drops the project of a dialectical reconception of the traditional objects of metaphysics, at least insofar as *the world* and *highest being* or *God* are concerned. As for the soul, Hegel would include a doctrine of it in his philosophy of spirit, where it acquires a distinctly Aristotelian shape. However, what he first concerned himself with was a way to give an introduction to the system. The problem was how to find an immanent way from the standpoint of reflection to that of philosophical knowledge. In addition, Hegel has yet to give a comprehensive answer to the skeptic. This became the task of *PhG*, which we will go into after the next section.

4.2.4 *The Determinate Negation as Gestalt*

The second reference to a “determinate negation” in the *SW*-manuscript comes in connection with the determination of *Gestalt* or body as such. More specifically, the determinate negation concerns the transition from the solar system (*System der Sonne*) to the treatment of the “system of the earth” (*Irrdisches System*). Hegel would later on abandon all attempts at a philosophical treatment of the solar system,²⁷¹ which means that we are here dealing with a determinate negation that does not – unlike that of *PhG* – play a part in Hegel’s mature philosophy. Because of this I consider it to be of lesser importance and I will not go into an extensive interpretation of what Hegel means with the terms here, as this would tell us more about Hegel’s Jena philosophy of nature than it would about the determinate negation. Still, we do get an insight into Hegel’s application of a logical idea that signals a break with the traditional conception of determination and negation.

271 In the 1817-edition of *Enz.* Hegel comments on his own attempt at finding a “rational ordering” of the planets of the solar system (§ 280): “Was ich in einer früheren Dissertation hierüber versucht habe, kann ich nicht mehr für befriedigend finden.” This dissertation was part of Hegel’s habilitation. See Depré, Olivier: “The Ontological Foundations of Hegel’s Dissertation of 1801,” in: *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature*, Houlgate, Stephen (ed.), Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.

The *sii*-philosophy of nature consists of the main headings that have already been mentioned: *System der Sonne* and *Irrdisches System*. The manuscript would most likely be completed by a part on the organic,²⁷² making it correspond to Hegel's general idea of a philosophy of nature in Jena.²⁷³ The part on the solar system is subdivided into *Begriff der Bewegung*, *Die erscheinende Bewegung* and *Realität der Bewegung*. Here Hegel moves from the movements of the ether, time, space and solar system into the restfulness of the earth. The paragraph containing the reference to the determinate negation is the first one in the part on the earthly system (bearing the subtitle *Construktion des Körpers oder der Gestalt*) and reads as follows:

Die Sphäre in ihrer Totalität ist zum Ruhepunkt gekommen, und die Bewegung hat sich in ihre Negation reducirt; aber diese Negation ist auch nicht als reine Negation, oder es ist schlechthin nur der Begriff derselben; sie ist nicht als Negation des Ganzen gesetzt, das als Bewegung erkannt worden ist. Daß sie in Wahrheit die Negation der Bewegung sey, muß sie an sich selbst dieses Ganze der Bewegung als ein negirtes haben, wodurch sie denn selbst erst die negative Totalität ist. Die Negation ist nicht für sich, sondern sie ist die bestimmte Negation der Bewegung, oder sie ist darauf bezogen, und auf sie als das Ganze derselben. Die Gestalt ist die Reduction der totalen Bewegung zur Ruhe.²⁷⁴

The main opposition involved in Hegel's presentation of the relationship of the solar system and the earthly system is that of movement and rest. Movement, in its totality (as the fully developed determinations of ether, space, time, solar system, and the moments contained in them) is *negated*, moves into its opposite, which is rest. Traditionally, negation is not itself a determination, and since Hegel is to proceed to a new content, the earthly system, body or *Gestalt*, he must add that the negation is a *determinate* negation. This draws on the logical-metaphysical doctrine that he had developed earlier

272 As indicated by how the manuscript ends: GW 7:338=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 364: „Dieser Proceß, der ebenso seine idellen Momente als Inhalt hat oder als Substanzen, und sie zugleich nur als sich aufhebend, und ihre Idealität, sowie ihr Bestehen, die sichselbst-gleiche Substanz oder die Bewegung vollkommen substansiell, ist das *Organische*.“

273 See Kimmerle, Heinz: “Hegels Naturphilosophie in Jena,” in: *Hegel in Jena*, Dieter Henrich, Klaus Düsing (eds.), Bonn: Bouvier Verlag 1980, pp. 207–215.

274 GW 7:228=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 243.

in the manuscript. However, in contrast to the determinate negation that was human life or *Genus*, the opposite of the solar system, its negation, arises from it immanently and contains it: The restfulness of the body is the negation of movement “in Wahrheit,” which means that it is not the negation of the whole, but has the whole of movement “als ein negiertes” in it (an sich), which also is the *concept* of movement. This means that the concept of movement is the truth of movement. Furthermore, “[...] die Realisation des Begriffes ist das Gegenteil des Begriffes; und so ist die Realisierung der Sphäre ihr zum Punkte Gewordenseyn, ihr Übergang in eine Ruhe welcher die Sphäre gegenübersteht [...]”.²⁷⁵ Hegel connects truth to the realization of the concept, but at this stage this is the transition into an opposite and not a return to the beginning. This will happen later on, when the restfulness “[...] als erfüllte Unendlichkeit heraus aus seiner absoluten Tiefen dem Allgemeinen entgegen strebt und zum Äther zurückkehren wird.”²⁷⁶

A *Gestalt*, or body is the negative totality (an empty substance containing the whole movement in it, but is itself at first devoid of positive content), which is determinate because it is *related to that which it is a negation of as its whole*. Restfulness, the body as such, gains positive content through the negated movement that it contains in itself. The first moment of a body is *weight* (*Schwere*).²⁷⁷ The dialectical determination in Hegel's Jena philosophy of nature therefore consists of a positive content becoming its negative. The negative contains the positive in it and itself becomes determined through the content it takes into itself. It is in this way that the determinate negation is “just as much positive as it is negative,” which is an important characteristic of the determinate negation in Hegel's mature works. However, as I will argue later on, I believe we are here dealing with a particular *form* of the determinate negation that can neither be identified with the determinate negation as human life, nor with the determinate negation of *PhG*. The reason for this is that the determinate negation as body or *Gestalt* stands in opposition to movement, which it contains in itself. This, I believe, is similar to the way Hegel uses the determinate negation in relation to the determination of *essence*

275 GW 7:227=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 243.

276 GW 7:227=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 243.

277 GW 7:229=Hegel, G.W.F.: *Jenaer Systementwürfe II. Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag 1982, p. 244: „Die Bewegung, so als das Allgemeine, und in ihrer Allgemeinheit so entgegengesetzt, daß sie einmal als negierte Bewegung, das ander-
mal als Positives sich auf sich bezieht, in die *Schwere*.”

in *WdL*. Later on we will also encounter Hegel's use of "determinate negation" as indicating *unity of opposites*, which clearly is not the case here. It could be that the organic is supposed to be a unity of opposites in *SI*, but since the manuscript does not contain such a treatment, we cannot know this.

4.3 The Determinate Negation in *PhG*

With the publication of *PhG* early in 1807, Hegel emerged onto the philosophical scene with a distinct philosophical voice of his own. He had created a work that established itself as one of the classics in philosophy. In *PhG*, Hegel attempted to lead consciousness from its natural standpoint to the standpoint of science. The basic idea of how this is done is just as radical today as it was then. Rather than asking which epistemology best represents the truth we take the epistemologies themselves as objects for our study. It is not a matter of finding out which theory is true, but rather of watching them develop into each other through their internal inconsistencies. This is not to be understood as a relativistic procedure that abandons the concept of truth once and for all. Through watching the development of consciousness, we also look for its essence. This is the *phenomenological* aspect of the procedure. We, the onlookers, come closer to the truth as we watch consciousness develop itself through its different shapes. If we think back to the beginnings of philosophy, we can see that there are some similarities with Plato's dialogues and Hegel's *PhG*. Both involve the standpoint of the onlooker, who watches as the different truth-claims dissolve. The difference is that in *PhG* this dissolution is essentially related to truth; it is how truth appears, and there is nothing beyond this appearance (although it can appear in a more pure form, such as in *WdL*). When we arrive at the end, essence and appearance are one. This is absolute knowledge, where we, as onlookers, merge with the experience of consciousness and recognize what the structure of the pure standpoint of knowledge is. From this standpoint Hegel then goes into the development of the rest of the system.

Not only do we find similarities with Plato's dialogues. There are also some similarities between *PhG* and Fichte's *WL*. Both suggest a way to understand what knowledge as such is. Both make use of a process of reflection to lead us to the principle of our procedure. For Fichte, this is the abstract principle of the *Thathandlung*. For Hegel, it is absolute knowledge, which consists of a review of its own becoming as well as an insight into the concept of the movement that informs this becoming. Fichte started out with an interest in giving an answer to the skeptic. This led him to the discovery of the principle

and method of his *WL*, as we have seen. However, Fichte stops being concerned with the possibility of skeptical objections to the specific points he makes in the *WL*. Not so for Hegel. He intends to integrate skepticism into his procedure and therefore to both recognize and overcome it. The threat of skepticism is that of forcing philosophy into a nothingness or indeterminacy, where it cannot say anything for or against specific philosophical position. When Hegel seeks to integrate skepticism into his philosophy, he therefore needs something that takes advantage of this power of negativity but at the same time is not brought to a halt by it. This is where the determinate negation comes into the picture. As we will see, the way the term is used in *PhG* is similar but not identical to the way it is used in the Jena-manuscript.

Hegel uses the term “determinate negation” explicitly in the introduction to *PhG*. Since it appears in the introduction and not in the preface (*Vorrede*) it can be said to be specifically related to *PhG* and not a general remark about the philosophy Hegel had in mind at the time.²⁷⁸ The term is embedded in methodological reflection, and the meaning and role Hegel assigns to it here has been very influential when it comes to the common usage of it within the scholarship:

Die *Vollständigkeit* der Formen des nicht realen Bewußtseins wird sich durch die Notwendigkeit des Fortganges und Zusammenhanges selbst ergeben. Um dies begreiflich zu machen, kann im allgemeinen zum voraus bemerkt werden, daß die Darstellung des nicht wahrhaften Bewußtseins in seiner Unwahrheit nicht eine bloß *negative* Bewegung ist. Eine solche einseitige Ansicht hat das natürliche Bewußtsein überhaupt von ihr; und ein Wissen, welches diese Einseitigkeit zu seinem Wesen macht, ist eine der Gestalten des unvollendeten Bewußtseins, welche in den Verlauf des Weges selbst fällt und darin sich darbieten wird. Sie ist nämlich der Skeptizismus, der in dem Resultate nur immer das *reine Nichts* sieht und davon abstrahiert, daß Nichts bestimmt das Nichts *dessen* ist, *woraus es resultiert*. Das Nichts ist aber nur, genommen als das Nichts dessen, woraus es herkommt, in der Tat das wahrhafte Resultat; es ist hiermit selbst ein *bestimmtes* und hat einen *Inhalt*. Der Skeptizismus, der mit der Abstraktion des Nichts oder der Leerheit endigt, kann von

278 Cf. Hegel's “Selbstanzeige” for *PhG*, TWA 3:593: “Dieser Band stellt das werdende Wissen dar [...] Ein zweiter Band wird das System der Logik als spekulativer Philosophie und der zwei übrigen Teile der Philosophie, die Wissenschaften der Natur und des Geistes enthalten.” This system had the same basic structure as his mature system, which also consisted of which consisted of a logic, a philosophy of nature and of spirit.

dieser nicht weiter fortgehen, sondern muß es erwarten, ob und was ihm etwa Neues sich darbietet, um es in denselben leeren Abgrund zu werfen. Indem dagegen das Resultat, wie es in Wahrheit ist, aufgefaßt wird, als bestimmte Negation, so ist damit unmittelbar eine neue Form entsprungen und in der Negation der Übergang gemacht, wodurch sich der Fortgang durch die vollständige Reihe der Gestalten von selbst ergibt.²⁷⁹

The general issues here are the necessity of the progression of the shapes of consciousness within *PhG* and the role skepticism plays within it. The experience that consciousness undergoes is a negative experience, which, by skepticism, is understood so as to mean that its result is nothing. Our endeavors of knowing the world and ourselves end up as failed projects. However, as Hegel indicates, the failure is not insignificant, but rather brings us to a new and truer form of consciousness, or to whatever the process leads to in the end (i.e. the result must not be a form or *Gestalt* of consciousness). This transition from failure to truth is mediated by the determinate negation.

There are in particular three questions that need to be answered in order to clarify the meaning and significance of the determinate negation within *PhG*. Firstly, what is its program and method? Secondly, what is the role skepticism plays in it? Thirdly, what is the role of the determinate negation? The first and second questions relate to complex issues and to give a thorough treatment of them would easily lead us off track. Hence I will only give broad answers to the first and second questions. Still, these answers will determine the content of the answer to the third question, which directly relates to our overall subject.

4.3.1 *The Program and Method of PhG*

The research on the program of *PhG* is ongoing, stemming at least in part from the fact that although *PhG* is very rich in philosophical content, it also a somewhat disorganized work, and was written very quickly and in a cryptic style. Furthermore, as I will argue, *PhG* represents a major change and progress in Hegel's thinking compared to his Jena articles and system drafts. This change, I believe, consists in making the determinate negation an integral part of the method. However, it should not come as a surprise that Hegel was still struggling both with how to make his new thoughts clear to himself as well as how to best express them. The difficult circumstances surrounding Hegel while he was writing most likely did not help this process. The result is a work that is very hard to decipher, both with regards to its programmatic intentions as well as the philosophical ideas and innovations contained in it.

279 TWA 3:73f.=GW 9:56f.

PhG can be interpreted as having many different tasks to fulfill. The tasks can be grouped into epistemological, metaphysical and introductory tasks, and there is reason to believe that these may be only loosely connected.²⁸⁰ However, I do believe that a simple, unified intention behind the work can be recognized. We can start with Hegel's "Selbstanzeige" – i.e. the advertisement of *PhG* written by Hegel himself around the time of its publication²⁸¹ – where Hegel provides a pointed summary of the work aimed at a broad audience. From it we learn that *PhG* is to replace psychological and abstract explanations of knowledge. Hegel neither intends to give an account of knowledge that is based on pre-conceived notions of the faculties of the human mind, nor does he intend to give a conventional philosophical argument favoring a certain conception of what knowledge is or should be like, and then defending it against objections and providing normative guidelines for how knowledge is achieved and secured in practice. Instead of this, Hegel presents a wholly new way of conceiving knowledge that is phenomenological and developmental in nature. Still, the overall aim of the project is to clarify what knowledge is and consists of, something that it has in common with epistemology in general, but more specifically the aim is to reach *knowledge about the becoming of knowledge, through this becoming itself*.

This approach takes common conceptions of knowledge as *shapes of consciousness or spirit*. These are to be understood as ways in which knowledge presents itself before it becomes fully apparent as knowledge as such, or pure knowledge. Furthermore, it is an approach that is *phenomenological* in that it aims at finding out what knowledge truly is by observing the ways in which it appears – taking appearances as a medium fully capable of conveying what knowledge is in itself. The approach is also *developmental*, which means that it does not take the appearances of particular forms of knowledge, i.e. the shapes of spirit, as stages that are left behind as they are overcome, but rather as something to be integrated into succeeding stages.

Since the opposition of consciousness with which *PhG* begins – where a subject seeks to know an object separate from itself through letting itself be fully determined by the object alone – is gradually overcome, one is also set loose from the traditional framework of epistemology. When the final shape of spirit appears, the object is no longer separate from the subject (which includes the inquiring subject, the onlooker); knowledge itself appears in the shape of

280 This has been argued at length by Michael Forster. See the first part of Forster, Michael: *Hegel's idea of a Phenomenology of Spirit*, Chicago: The University Press of Chicago 1998. I speak of "introductory" where Forster speaks of "pedagogical."

281 TWA 3:592.

pure or absolute knowledge. This is now conceived of as “die erste Wissenschaft,”²⁸² which, when developed in its purity, is the content of *WdL*. *PhG* therefore brings with it a reconception of epistemology. The end result is another form of knowledge than the one sought by the preceding stages of consciousness, but is nonetheless a form of knowledge, one that coincides with the speculative logic.

Entering into an actual understanding of these works requires that one moves along with the movement of thinking that informs it through and through, each shape of consciousness coming closer to the full realization of the intention; we become aware of the structure of our own development through recollecting, reliving or repeating this development from a higher epistemological and metaphysical standpoint. In this way the task of realizing the reconception of epistemology and metaphysics is just as much introductory; it aims to bring the readership to the standpoint of pure thinking or speculative logic. This also expresses itself in the fact that Hegel does not think that the development of consciousness in *PhG* is fully immanent. Rather, the transitions are introduced from without.²⁸³ Still the transitions must be seen to bring about what is inherent in consciousness; both in the consciousness of the reader as well as in the consciousness that one observes phenomenologically. Hegel thus acts as a Socratic midwife.

Some more remarks about the program of *PhG* are necessary. Specifically, we have to look at how Hegel presents the program in the introduction, which is also the most immediate context of the determinate negation here. The introduction to *PhG* is mainly a discussion of the notion of method in relation to philosophy, firstly as a critique of a certain methodology and view of knowledge that Hegel finds to be defective, and then, secondly, as an outline of Hegel's conception of a new methodology. The view that Hegel criticizes states that knowledge is an instrument or medium that influences the object of knowledge and that, consequently, this influence will have to be removed in order to reach the truth. What Hegel has in mind here is the modern epistemological perspective, which says that since anything that is an object of knowledge, whether in philosophy or any other science, is mediated by consciousness and the faculties of the mind, knowledge will therefore be ultimately subjective. Because of this, the most important and fundamental philosophical question is whether or not this mediation is capable of providing truth. In a sense, this modern perspective – established by Descartes and reaching full force with Kant's critical philosophy – is the reason for the need

282 TWA 3:592.

283 GW 9:61=TWA 3:78: “Diese Betrachtung der Sache ist unsere Zutat [...]”

of a phenomenology of spirit at all, in particular insofar as one – with Hegel – aims at a critical revival of the ancient, metaphysical perspective, where thinking and being are conceived as one.

Hegel specifically rejects the view that it is possible to remove the influence that knowledge, conceived as a medium or instrument, has on the object, so as to bring the “untainted” thing itself into view. The reason for his rejection is, in short, that we cannot remove this influence without removing ourselves from that which we want to know. Knowing can only happen through knowing, and insofar as knowledge is an instrument that we always have to make use of in order to know it is immediately clear that when we do not make use of it, i.e. when we remove the influence, then we are no longer using the instrument, and hence no longer in a situation that allows for knowledge. It could be that there are other ways of conceiving knowledge where there is an immediate connection to the object known, but in general Hegel rejects such approaches as being unclear and dogmatic. Referring to an immediate, intellectual intuition as a ground for a specific claim must present itself as dogmatic, and *prima facie* contains just as little philosophical convincing force as an opposed dogmatic claim. When reasons for a dogmatic claim are given, one enters into the discursive realm and the convincing force is located fully within the relationship between a claim and its justification, making the intellectual intuition superfluous.

In fact, Hegel believes that the threat of dogmatism poses a real problem and needs to be tackled: If one looks at the history of philosophy, it seems to be possible to give good arguments for almost any opposed positions, and there is no way of deciding which view represents the truth. One could ask for a universal criteria that could decide what truly represents knowledge, but the development of such a criteria would require that it is already known what true reality is, which again is a philosophical question with many different and opposed answers. And so the problem repeats itself: When faced with two opposing views both of which present themselves as being equally well justified, one seems forced to dogmatically, i.e. contingently, reject one view and accept the other.

Looking at all the possible philosophical positions and the lack of universal consensus reached through argument certainly gives the impression that there is some defectiveness inherent in human knowledge. Either in the instrument itself or in the human tendency towards dogmatism, not only through self-delusion and subjective interest, but within its discursive practice as such. Even if there are presently better reasons to accept one position and not its opposite, this could simply mean that the better argument for the opposite view has not yet been discovered. That Hegel was worried about this, or at least

motivated by it when developing his reconception of philosophical thinking, is evident in the preface to *PhG*, where the well-known metaphor of the plant is introduced: Philosophical systems should be thought to relate to each other not as standpoints to be argued for or against, but rather as standing in a relationship to each other that corresponds to the stages of the development of a plant, where each stage develops into the next, all stages being equally necessary within the whole.²⁸⁴

This idea is of major importance not only in *PhG*, but also in Hegel's whole conception of philosophy. For instance, in *WdL*, he claims, discussing Spinoza, that the true philosophical system cannot be opposed to the untrue system, but must contain it,²⁸⁵ and, furthermore, a reflection on this problem leads up to the "organic" conception of philosophy that informs Hegel's approach to the history of philosophy.²⁸⁶ On this view the development of a new system of philosophy would have to face a serious challenge: On the one hand, it would of course itself refute any opposing system through itself, but, on the other hand,

284 TWA 3:12=GW 9:10.

285 TWA 6:249ff.

286 TWA 18:28ff. Cf. *Enz.* § 161Z=TWA 8/308f: "Übergehen in Anderes ist der dialektische Prozeß in der Sphäre des *Seins* und Scheinen in Anderes in der Sphäre des *Wesens*. Die Bewegung des *Begriffs* ist dagegen *Entwicklung*, durch welche nur dasjenige gesetzt wird, was an sich schon vorhanden ist. In der Natur ist es das organische Leben, welches der Stufe des *Begriffs* entspricht. So entwickelt sich z. B. die Pflanze aus ihrem Keim. Dieser enthält bereits die ganze Pflanze in sich aber in ideeller Weise, und man hat somit deren Entwicklung nicht so aufzufassen, als ob die verschiedenen Teile der Pflanze Wurzel, Stengel, Blätter usw., im Keim bereits *realiter*, jedoch nur ganz klein vorhanden wären. Dies ist die sogenannte Einschachtelungshypothese, deren Mangel somit darin besteht, daß dasjenige was nur erst in ideeller Weise vorhanden ist, als bereits existierend betrachtet wird. Das Richtige in dieser Hypothese ist dagegen dies, daß der *Begriff* in seinem Prozeß bei sich selbst bleibt und daß durch denselben dem Inhalt nach nichts Neues gesetzt, sondern nur eine Formveränderung hervorgebracht wird. Diese Natur des *Begriffs*, sich in seinem Prozeß als Entwicklung seiner selbst zu erweisen, ist es dann auch, welche man vor Augen hat, wenn man von dem Menschen angeborenen Ideen spricht oder, wie solches Platon getan, alles Lernen bloß als Erinnerung betrachtet, welches jedoch gleichfalls nicht so verstanden werden darf, als ob dasjenige, was den Inhalt des durch Unterricht gebildeten Bewußtseins ausmacht, in seiner bestimmten Entfaltung vorher schon in demselben Bewußtsein wäre vorhanden gewesen. – Die Bewegung des *Begriffs* ist gleichsam nur als ein Spiel zu betrachten, das Andere, was durch dieselbe gesetzt wird, ist in der Tat nicht ein Anderes. In der christlich-religiösen Lehre ist dies so ausgesprochen, daß Gott nicht nur eine Welt erschaffen hat, die ihm als ein Anderes gegenübersteht, sondern daß er auch von Ewigkeit her einen Sohn erzeugt hat, in welchem er als Geist bei sich selbst ist."

the new system would already be refuted by any existing system as soon as it was finished. Of course, the refutation would be dogmatic, but the result is that it is impossible to decide which system is true. What Hegel needed was therefore a conception of a philosophical system that was integrative, i.e. that did not directly challenge any existing systems, but both developed from them and was able to include them as essential parts of a whole. And for this he needed a conceptual tool that was able to meet the challenge of the problem of not being able to decide between two opposing philosophical systems. Historically, this worry had become very acute through Kant's antinomies, which imply that one necessarily must suspend judgment in relation to the most fundamental questions of philosophy.

In any case, we are left with the systematical question: What is left when there neither is a way to escape the possible distorting influence of subjectivity on knowledge (as in the instrument-metaphor), nor a possibility of grounding knowledge through intellectual intuition, and when any discursive approach seems to result in a more or less explicit form of dogmatism? The short answer is that what is left is to allow negativity into the process of knowledge. Not in the sense of an approximation of truth through "trial and error," but by not shying away from error and understanding this as a knowledge in a negative form.

What Hegel aims at with his phenomenology is the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness through watching it play itself out, or, more precisely, by letting itself set up the standard for knowledge and showing how it is not able to live up to this standard. This is the skeptical side of *PhG*, which we will now turn to. As we will see, skepticism is an integral part of Hegel's methodology, but it does not represent the final word, rather it is mainly a negative stage that leads up to the determinate negation, and is therefore a stage that will be surpassed.

4.3.2 *Skepticism in PhG*

Skepticism for Hegel is not characterized by a mindset of doubt that undermines or directly challenges a certain position, which then can be defended and strengthened by finding the right arguments. It is rather the complete doubt or even despair, "die Bewußte Einsicht in die Unwahrheit des erscheinenden Wissens, dem dasjenige das Reellste ist, was in Wahrheit vielmehr nur der nicht realisierte Begriff ist."²⁸⁷ This equals the notion of a self-completing ("sich vollbringender") skepticism. In the following I will try to uncover what is meant by the claim that a self-completing skepticism becomes

²⁸⁷ TWA 3/72=GW 9:56.

aware of the untruth of the whole of appearing knowledge, and how appearing knowledge is “caught up” in the untruth of the non-realized concept.

The distinction between ancient and modern skepticism is important for Hegel. Ancient (more precisely: pyrrhonian) skepticism can be described by the following keywords, representing stages in a skeptical procedure: *isosthenie* (or equipollence), *epoché* (suspension of judgment) and *ataraxia* (tranquility). Isosthenie is a state of an argument or discourse where there are equally good reasons for believing one claim as well as its counter-claim. The ancient skeptics codified this approach into certain so-called *tropes*, representing different modes of argument resulting in equipollence. Since the tropes consisted of general claims, they could also be applied to more specific cases, as forms of overarching argumentative strategies. The skeptic reacted to equipollence with a suspension of judgment (*epoché*), which means that one neither rejects nor accepts either the claim or the counter-claim, but enters into a form of intellectual neutrality. However, it can be noted that the suspension of judgment was directed against a claim about how something *really is* and not how something *appears*. A skeptic could very well *act* according to appearances; the main point is that one should not hold any deep convictions about how something really is. The final aim of this form of skepticism was a certain state of tranquility (*ataraxia*), characterized by a global suspension of judgment and belief.

Modern skepticism is inferior and less radical than ancient skepticism. Ancient skepticism is based on the equipollence of counter-claims; modern skepticism rather attacks just one claim, leaving the opposite claim out of consideration. The attack is based on certain presuppositions that are taken for granted, and is therefore actually of a dogmatic nature. Ancient skepticism – especially the Agrippan version of pyrrhonism – is superior to this, since it is systematically using dogmatism against itself: Any dogmatic claim as to the real nature of things can be met with an equal an opposite dogmatic claim, both having equal justification. In this way, ancient skepticism incorporates dogmatism into itself, it uses dogmatism as part of the way of reaching tranquility. Furthermore, the ancient skeptic would force the modern skeptic into the Agrippan trilemma, where any claim must either be outright dogmatic, circular, or be caught in an infinite regress with regards to its justification.²⁸⁸ Since ancient skepticism both includes modern skepticism and has superior

288 For an interpretation of *PhG* as an answer to the Agrippan trilemma, see Westphal, Kenneth: “Hegel’s Manifold Response to Skepticism in ‘The Phenomenology of Spirit,’” in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 103, 2003, pp. 147–178.

methodical means at its disposal, Hegel thinks the former is the proper concern for a philosophy concerned with knowledge.²⁸⁹

Hegel had been developing this view in the Jena-essay *Verhältnis des Skepticismus zur Philosophie*, where he explicitly points to the ancient skepticism as the best weapon against “the dogmatism of finitude.”²⁹⁰ Furthermore, he points to Plato’s *Parmenides* as the consummate work of real (ancient) skepticism, destroying any and all claims the understanding has to offer. Philosophy *requires* this destruction. Thinking must be freed from the sphere of the finite (the understanding) and this is what skepticism has to offer (note, however, that this liberation is only negative – it is only a removal from the finite, not a complete transition into the true infinite).

Hegel explicitly states that this can only happen through “breaking the law of contradiction” – he even claims that every claim formed by reason must contain a violation of this law, insofar as one keeps the (speculative) concept in mind.²⁹¹ Most likely, at this time Hegel was working on how to connect ancient skepticism with positive dialectics, and how to relate this to Kant’s antinomies. The showing forth of antinomies is not explicitly called dialectics in the skepticism-essay, but it should be noted that Hegel points to reason as being able to *resolve* the antinomies, which means that he is equally committed to the resolution of contradiction as he may be to “proving” that every finite determination is contradictory. More precisely, he was concerned with giving an alternative to the resolution of the antinomies offered by Kant, which rests on an assumption of the distinction between the thing in itself and appearances. Exactly how the transition from the negative result of the antinomies to a new, Kant-surpassing positive resolution is not made explicit in the essay on skepticism – probably because Hegel had not yet developed the proper means for such a resolution. He does, however, offer an important consideration about the significance of contradiction:

[...] wenn in irgendeinem Satze, der eine Vernunfterkennntnis ausdrückt, das Reflektierte desselben, die Begriffe, die in ihm enthalten sind, isoliert und die Art, wie sie verbunden sind, betrachtet wird, so muß es sich

289 For a discussion and defense of the claim that ancient skepticism is superior to modern skepticism, see Forster, Michael: “Hegel on the Superiority of Ancient over Modern Skepticism,” in: *Skeptizismus und spekulatives Denken in der Philosophie Hegels*, Fulda, Hans-Friedrich, Horstmann, Rolf-Peter (eds.), Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1996, pp. 64–82.

290 TWA 2:245.

291 TWA 2:230.

zeigen, daß diese Begriffe zugleich aufgehoben oder auf eine solche Art vereinigt sind, daß sie sich widersprechen, sonst wäre es kein vernünftiger, sondern ein verständiger Satz.²⁹²

As it will become clear later on, this is an early formulation of what Hegel means by a “higher concept” and the way in which its parts or species are contained in it as ideal moments.

There is, however, reason to believe that Hegel had developed his view on skepticism further by the time of the appearance of *PhG* in response to Schulze (the author of *Anesidemus*).²⁹³ When writing the skepticism-essay (published 1801), Hegel had yet to develop an account of how one can proceed immanently from finitude to the infinite. In the early Jena period, the destruction of the finite forms of thought was a requirement for speculative philosophy, but the destruction had a solely negative function in relation to it; its content was not conceived as entering into it in a new and transformed shape. Similarly the positive function of skepticism was only that of making room for reason. The new role of skepticism within *PhG* was that of shape to be overcome within the actual exposition of progress of spirit as well as within each step of the progress where equipollence becomes possible. In fact, Hegel does not construct any equipollence arguments. He easily could have done so by taking each dialectical reversal of a claim of natural consciousness as an argument showing that the claim is inconsistent, and thus, by following the same form of argument Kant uses in his antinomies, one can show that the contradictory claim is true. When this approach is then applied to the opposite claim, the result is equipollence. However, Hegel does not believe in such a procedure. Rather, he thinks that the important aspects of skepticism has been integrated into the phenomenological approach and therefore can no longer work against philosophy.²⁹⁴ The point of integration corresponds to the point where an equipollence argument *could* have been construed, and, furthermore, is the point where the determinate negation enters. In a sense, the determinate negation is not only an answer to equipollence, but also depends upon a

²⁹² TWA 2:229.

²⁹³ See Meist, Kurt Rainer: “‘Sich vollbringender Skeptizismus’. G.E. Schulzes Replik auf Hegel und Schelling,” in: *Der Streit um die Gestalt einer Ersten Philosophie (1799–1807)*, Jaeschke, Walter (ed.), Hamburg: Meiner, 1993, pp. 192–230.

²⁹⁴ See Heidemann, Dietmar: “Formen des Skeptizismus. Hegels kritische Toleranz gegenüber der pyrrhonischen Skepsis,” in: *Gegen das ‘Unphilosophische Unwesen’*. Das Kritische Journal der Philosophie von Schelling und Hegel, Vieweg, Klaus (ed.), Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002, pp. 69–83.

suspension of judgment with regards to which of two counter-claims are correct. It also offers its own variety of tranquility, namely that of speculative thinking, of thinking of opposed determinations – including those of reality and appearance – as one.²⁹⁵

4.3.3 *The Determinate Negation as an Answer to Skepticism*

The main function of the determinate negation in *PhG* is to make its negative procedure into one that is positive as well. Furthermore, as we have seen, it is intended to be the overcoming of skepticism. When Hegel introduces the determinate negation, he contrasts it to the “pure nothing” that skepticism sees as the result of its procedure. Characteristic of the “pure nothing” of skepticism is that it does not take into consideration that the nothing that results from it is actually the nothing that belongs to that from which it results; when this is taken into consideration, the nothing is “in der Tat das wahrhafte Resultat; es ist hiermit selbst ein bestimmtes und hat einen Inhalt.”²⁹⁶ Furthermore, again in contrast, skepticism rejects anything that may be offered as new insights or objections, casting everything into the emptiness, the empty abyss, with which it ends. When, however, the result of the negative procedure of skepticism is taken as a *determinate negation*, the result is conceived “in its truth.” A “new form” has arisen, which is also a negation in which the transition is made, “wodurch sich der Fortgang durch die vollständige Reihe der Gestalten von selbst ergibt.”²⁹⁷ The determinate negation is therefore (a) the negative result of skepticism conceived in its truth, (b) a negation with content or determinateness, (c) a new form, and (d) a transition through which the completeness of the shapes of consciousness will be established.

Hegel does not go into a systematic elaboration of the meaning of the determinate negation with all its facets in *PhG* – in fact, he does so nowhere. However, as it we will go into later on, the determinate negation is a part of the dialectical method and represents one of its most important aspects. Although it is not possible to give an elaborate treatment of the determinate negation before its logical foundation has been investigated, some remarks can still be

295 TWA 3:80=GW 9:61f.: “Indem [das Bewußtsein] zu seiner wahren Existenz sich fortreibt, wird es einen Punkt erreichen, auf welchem es seinen Schein ablegt, mit Fremdartigen, das nur für es und als ein anderes ist, behaftet zu sein, oder wo die Erscheinungen dem Wesen gleich wird, seine Darstellung hiemit mit eben diesem Punkte der eigentlichen Wissenschaft des Geistes zusammenfällt, und endlich, indem es selbst dies sein Wesen erfaßt, wird es die Natur des absoluten Wissens selbst bezeichnen.”

296 TWA 3:74=GW 9:57.

297 TWA 3:74=GW 9:57.

made here, in particular with regards to the relation between the determinate negation and skepticism. Skepticism as a separate subject does not appear anywhere within Hegel's logic, while in *PhG* it is not only of explicit programmatic interest, but also belongs to the content of the work itself. The reason for this, I believe, is that on the level of appearing knowledge, Hegel must explore the *option* of a skeptical nothing as a purely negative result of a phenomenological consideration of knowledge. As Hegel admits, the phenomenology of spirit is characterized by despair and a continuous dissolution not only of the structures within which knowledge claims are made, but also of the life forms surrounding them, of the common moral practices and norms.

The point that Hegel makes in relation to skepticism as a form of consciousness is that it is dependent on actually practicing its skepticism and hence of its other. The freedom or tranquility that is supposed to result from skepticism is only established through arguing against and rejecting non-skeptical positions. It is therefore a false consciousness, since it is not the free and tranquil consciousness it makes itself out to be. The skeptical triumph starts to fade as soon as equipollence is reached and judgment suspended: The skeptic has to wait in silence for another argument, or even seek out another non-skeptic, in order to re-live its freedom. This is a way in which the result of skepticism is in fact not a pure nothing in which the skeptic can rest, but rather a determinate nothing, i.e. the negation of the unrest of discursive argument, experienced – for a while – as tranquility. This is, however, another determinateness than that of the determinate negation, which in *PhG* is a new form of consciousness entering into new constellations with further forms, i.e. it is not caught in the continuous establishment and loss of skeptical tranquility.

At the level of the phenomenological consideration of consciousness skepticism is already overcome as an *option* to the procedure that Hegel follows within *PhG*. This is evident from the fact that Hegel does not start out and proceed with a series of equipollence arguments until he comes to skepticism as a shape of consciousness, which is then overcome, giving rise to a new approach that integrates the skeptical procedure. The important point, I believe, is that since Hegel builds skepticism as a shape of consciousness into the investigation of appearing knowledge, he has an answer to possible purely skeptical attacks. If the attack is of the modern skeptical kind, he could offer an equally strong counter-argument, which in effect would also be a stronger skeptical position, and then introduce the notion of the determinate negation, which makes each position illusory or part of the *Schein* of the yet to be fully developed concept. If it is of the ancient kind, he would point to the skeptical shape of consciousness, where the whole skeptical procedure has been revealed as inconsistent, although being an integral part appearing knowledge.

This can be made more precise through the following reflection: As I have already pointed out, all stages of *PhG* presents conceptual movements that can be used to present equipollence arguments. With the introduction of the determinate negation, which finds a positive result where skepticism finds nothing but itself, Hegel provides a series of alternatives to the skeptic, all of which would have to be treated on their own. Since Hegel thinks to have unmasked the skeptical procedure as such within *PhG*, he has, according to this, basically rejected it as a *methodical option*. The stage where equipollence arguments could have been constructed, i.e. where two opposing claims within a shape of consciousness both have been dissolved, is to be met with a determinate negation and not a skeptical suspension of judgment aimed at tranquility, since the latter is a procedure which undermines itself. Since this has been shown within the presentation of skepticism as a shape of consciousness, it is not necessary to show it at every stage where an equipollence argument could have been brought forth.

That Hegel had already conceived this methodical procedure to apply to the whole system by the time he had written *PhG* is evident from the preface, where he speaks of “the determinate negative” and “das bestimmte Negative.”²⁹⁸ Here the negative is reflective thinking (*Räsonnieren*), which stays outside of the subject matter, discursively considering this or that reason for or against a position, while the thinking subject itself remains outside of the matter itself. This parallels the skeptic who does not take a stance either for or against opposed positions, except that reflective thinking remains caught up in the empty, theorizing I, while skepticism in a more practical sense makes use of the emptiness resulting from methodically using reflection against itself. The thinking that enters the matter itself is speculative or the kind of thinking that reaches the concept of the matter, i.e. not proposing this or that theory for which reasons can be adduced for and against, but rather leaving the thinking I to itself, on the one side superior to the matter at hand, while, on the other hand, incapable of conceiving the object in truth. This negativity, however, *belongs to* speculative or philosophical thinking in general. Speculative thinking integrates reflective/discursive thinking into itself.²⁹⁹ At first, reflective thinking is a condition for speculation, but in the end speculation makes reflection into its

298 TWA 3:357=GW 9:42.

299 Cf. TWA 3:61=GW 9:45: “Daß die Form des Satzes aufgehoben wird, muß nicht nur auf unmittelbare Weise geschehen, nicht durch den bloßen Inhalt des Satzes. Sondern diese entgegengesetzte Bewegung muß ausgesprochen werden; sie muß nicht nur jene innerliche Hemmung [sein], sondern dies Zurückgehen des Begriffs in sich muß *dargestellt* sein.”

own exactly at the point where reflection cannot proceed any further. Reflective thinking – which also skepticism builds on, e.g. through relying on the basic distinction of appearance and reality – has a necessary successor, and this successor has the negative as “seine *immanente* Bewegung und Bestimmung, wie als *Ganzes* derselben das *Positive*. Als Resultat aufgefaßt, ist es das aus dieser Bewegung herkommende, das *bestimmte* Negative, und hiemit ebenso ein positiver Inhalt.”³⁰⁰

We can now return to Hegel's original claim that self-completing skepticism is “die Bewußte Einsicht in die Unwahrheit des erscheinenden Wissens, dem dasjenige das Reellste ist, was in Wahrheit vielmehr nur der nichtrealisierte Begriff ist.” The self-completing skepticism completes itself because, firstly, it applies itself – as an integral part of the method of *PhG* – to all of appearing knowledge, and, secondly, because it lays the ground for a speculative science or phenomenology, which is the systematic presentation both of the untruth of appearing knowledge as well as of the concept. Stated differently, the presentation of the untruth of appearing knowledge is itself a part of the realization of the concept; speculative thinking makes the appearance of untruth, the negative, into a movement that has the positive significance of bringing about a whole that includes the preceding movement and reversals of claims within the shapes of consciousness, which *could* have resulted in skepticism, but is rather met with a determinate negation. This negation – the positive, true result of skepticism, representing a transition to a new form with a content of its own – is a methodical “tool” that marks a definite break with the earlier Jena-conception of a philosophical system.

Furthermore, it represents a definite break with Kant and the earlier idealists through by being a discursively established and determinately conceived insight into the “beyond.” Vital to this break is the re-conception of the introduction of ancient skepticism into philosophy, which Kant had begun. Firstly, while Kant directly makes use of a sort of equipollence arguments within his antinomies, Hegel concentrates on the immanent reversal of the shapes of consciousness (or, in his logic, the reversals of pure thinking). Secondly, Kant's antinomies result in a suspension of judgment about the thing in itself. Kant argues that the opposition is either contrary or subcontrary, although a definite statement on the matter is beyond the limits of reason. In contrast, Hegel's speculative approach is in a sense a response that states “neither this nor that,” or “both this and that,” in relation to opposed claims,³⁰¹ although the

300 TWA 3:47=GW 9/42.

301 TWA 19:399: “Zum Wissen des Spekultativen gehört, daß es außer dem *Entweder-Oder* noch ein Drittes gibt; es ist *Sowohl als auch*, und *Weder, Noch*.” In interesting comparison

speculative is more correctly described as being another way of thinking that is beyond – although still resting upon – discursive thinking, including opposites within a determinate unity. Thirdly, Kant's appropriation of skepticism, with its ensuing limits of reason, ends in a certain form of tranquility. The earlier metaphysical questions into the real nature of things beyond appearances need no longer bother the philosopher and the realm of faith should be left alone by reason.³⁰² For Hegel, philosophical speculation also gives rise to a form of tranquility in that the deepest philosophical questions can be re-approached and given a positive significance, finding reason where there appears to be none, re-uniting the thinking human being with the world.³⁰³

Henceforth the determinate negation remains significant and unchanged within the core of Hegel's methodical, philosophical thinking throughout the rest of his life, though the conception seems to be somewhat unclear or indeterminate in *PhG*. The strictly conceptual content of the conception of the determinate negation is elaborated throughout *WdL*. I will therefore not attempt here to say more about what is meant by the determinate negation as "positive," as having content, being an new form, and so on. In fact, all of these issues will be treated elaborately later on. Indeed, getting a grip of the conceptual meaning of the determinate negation is vital to the understanding of *PhG*, and since this conceptual meaning is made clear throughout *WdL*, it will only be possible to come to a full understanding of what is happening, or what is supposed to be happening, in *PhG*, as far as it represents an overcoming of skepticism, by clarifying the conception of the determinate negation within *WdL*. For instance, in *WdL* Hegel considers the notion of a "pure nothing" as "zero" or as neutrality and gives reasons for why the dialectical movement of the determinations of pure thought is not resolved into a neutrality, but rather into the determinate negation and a speculative unity. How is this neutrality related to skepticism? Is it an instance of it, or is the "pure nothing" of skepticism that Hegel speaks of in *PhG* something else? If it is an instance of it, *WdL* will provide a better understanding of the reasons Hegel has of rejecting skepticism.

to this is the so-called "Tetralemma des Bewußtseins" as presented in Blau, Ulrich: *Die Logik der Unbestimmtheiten und Paradoxien*, Heidelberg: Synchron, 2008, p. 889, where a "neither-nor"-position is presented as the higher one in relation to the "both-and" position of speculative "mystical monism." Cf. Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls. Hegels spekulative Dialektik in der "Wissenschaft der Logik,"* Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001, pp. 118–119.

302 AA III:19.

303 For a further discussion of Kant's relation to skepticism, see Forster, Michael: *Kant and Skepticism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

This is, however, an issue that we will leave aside for now. In any case, it should be clear at this point that the determinate negation is of vital importance not only to the program of *PhG*, with its aim of an absolute knowledge where the opposition of consciousness is finally overcome and knowledge “es nicht mehr über sich selbst hinaus zu gehen nötig hat, wo es sich selbst findet, und der Begriff dem Gegenstande, der Gegenstand dem Begriffe entspricht”;³⁰⁴ it is also of vital importance to Hegel’s conception of methodical, philosophical thinking in a post-Kantian environment.

4.4 Summary

Hegel’s critique of Fichte in Jena was that it remained bound to an ought that could never be realized. According to Hegel, Fichte had only reached a subjective subject-object unity. Though Hegel had learned much from Fichte’s method, in the end, he saw Fichte’s philosophy as dogmatic, i.e. “unvermitteltes Entgegensetzen eines unvermittelten Ansich und Anstoßes.”³⁰⁵ From Schelling Hegel takes the idea of a philosophy of nature and the idea of the absolute as indifference, although this indifference is made dynamic and expressible through reflection. Understanding the absolute as containing opposition in it is the reason why Hegel does not conceive of reflective thinking as fully separate from the absolute. It is this conception of the absolute that allows him to speak of the “appearing absolute.” The absolute reflects itself in itself, separates itself into appearance and the static absolute, to then unite with itself in this appearance. Through our own reflection we can mirror this process.

What is most significant in Hegel’s Jena-manuscript on logic and metaphysics is that in it he develops a doctrine of life and knowledge, or life as self-knowledge, which is also identical to the self-knowledge of life. Such a doctrine is to remain his answer to the question of how to bring unity to a system of philosophy. As we have seen, the conception of the determinate negation allows Hegel to find a concrete other to the I, an other in which the I can find itself as itself, not forever opposed to a not-I. The not-I is not a non-conceptual *Anstoß*, but, as *humanity*, is a negation of the I that has its own inner principle of determination, and is therefore also a determinate negation; humanity cannot be thought of as something that the I posits, since humanity just as

304 TWA 3:74=GW 9:57.

305 Janke, Wolfgang: “Das bloß gesollte Absolute,” in: *Der Streit um die Gestalt einer Ersten Philosophie (1799–1807)*, Walter Jaeschke (ed.), Hamburg: Meiner 1999, p. 179.

much brings about life. The infinite I is the I that sees itself in this process of coming to be within humanity, and thereby it becomes absolute spirit. The Jena philosophy of nature gives an example of Hegel using the determinate negation in a clearly developmental sense, representing a point of transition from a totality of shapes into another opposite shape. The totality of the different determinations of movement (space, time, solar system, etc.) is negated, enters into restfulness, but a restfulness that contains the whole of its movement in it.

PhG represents Hegel's response to the challenge of a justification of a philosophical system as it had arisen in the wake of Kant's critical philosophy. Hegel makes use of a methodical procedure that he, inspired by Fichte, had been developing in Jena. He advances beyond Fichte with his introduction of the concept of the true infinite, which in *PhG* is represented by the phenomenological investigation of consciousness, i.e. consciousness takes itself as its object. As consciousness undergoes its negative experiences, which consist of being submitted to the dialectical reversals of the principles that consciousness takes as the guide of its theoretical and practical attitudes, it gradually approaches its true principle. This principle is absolute knowledge, which in essence consists of the movement that consciousness undergoes through its development.

In order to make this conception into one that is immune to skepticism, Hegel, rather than trying to defeat all possible objections with arguments, sought to integrate skepticism into methodical philosophical procedure. What he needed was a way out if the indeterminate negativity that is the result of skepticism. In *PhG* the determinate negation is the conceptual tool that makes this integration possible. The specific characteristics of the determinate negation in *PhG* are, as we have seen, that it is (a) the negative result of skepticism conceived in is truth, (b) a negation with content or determinateness, (c) a new form, and (d) a transition through which the completeness of the shapes of consciousness will be established. This allows skepticism, in its most problematic, ancient form, to play itself out: Two opposing views are equally reasonable and equally untenable, but the nothingness that arises from this is not the final word, but rather a point of transition into a new, positive determination. In *PhG* this procedure is introduced by us, so as to move consciousness along to its new shape and finally to the standpoint of science.³⁰⁶ However, the conceptual framework that is needed in order to make sense of and justify how the contradictions of consciousness do not result in nothing is not developed until *WL*.

306 TWA 3:73=GW 9:61.

Review and Outlook

With his critical philosophy, Kant opened up a new perspective on determination and philosophy in general. As the German idealists struggled with finding the proper form of transcendental philosophy and giving an adequate answer to post-Kantian skepticism, they moved into the realm of pure thinking, searching for the fundamental principles of knowledge and being. Kant provided a new framework of determination and formulated some novel ideas, such as the unity of opposed categories in a third, and how to conceive of comprehensive philosophical knowledge. A pressing problem he had not been able to solve, however, was that of the dualism of practical and theoretical philosophy. Trying to go beyond dualism would have brought him into conflict with the proponents of faith, and he also had good arguments against treating the traditional objects of special metaphysics as illusory objects. Furthermore, Kant had good reasons for claiming that traditional ontology was on the wrong track; all proper knowledge claims must be related to the realm of the senses. What metaphysics can do is at most to account for the conditions of appearance.

The German idealists after Kant were faced with the problem of finding new principles capable of providing unity to a system and therefore going beyond dualism, while being aware that purely theoretical speculation leads us astray, entangling us in illusions that are due to the nature and limitations of our cognitive capacities. Taking the skeptical reaction to Reinhold as a point of departure, Fichte starts developing a system of philosophy as a system of knowledge based on a principle that brings being and thinking together in one intellectual act, the self-positing *Thathandlung* lying at the ground of consciousness. However, Fichte does not start with this principle, but seeks to justify it through a process of reflection that eventually leads us to it. When we have reached the principle we can then proceed to its differentiation into theoretical and practical philosophy. In this way Fichte found a way of moving from differentiation (consciousness and its objects) into unity and then back to differentiation. This provides both a justification of a first principle and a development of it into a system of philosophy.

To a certain extent, this is already a break with Kant, since Fichte speaks of intellectual intuition as something that is available to the human being. But as it turns out, Fichte wishes to stay within the confounds of transcendental philosophy, which means that he does not say anything about the world as it is

in itself. He only speaks about the conditions for consciousness. This means that Fichte is a strict Kantian (critical or transcendental) idealist, and that he relies on an unexplained *Anstoß*, or thing in itself, as a ground for experience. That this leads to a problem becomes apparent as he moves into his account of practical philosophy; the subject does not enter into a unity with objectivity, but can only seek to make it correspond to itself. Such correspondence would only be possible for God. This means that Fichte had not succeeded in providing a system of philosophy that was fully unified. Its principle was not lead back to itself; both consciousness and intentional activity required an external *is*, and therefore do not merge with the *Thathandlung*.

In his response to Fichte, Schelling advanced the idea that transcendental philosophy needs to be complimented by a philosophy of nature. Such a philosophy can give an account of the *real* and therefore gives renewed hope for a fully realized unity of a philosophical system. The problem for Schelling became how to justify the procedure of his philosophy of nature as well as how to unify both philosophies. His suggestion was to introduce a conception of absolute indifference between being and thinking. But since this absolute was beyond all oppositions, in the sense that it was not even opposed to opposition, the problem became how finite consciousness can approach this absolute.

Hegel's response was to conceive of the absolute as something that shows itself in reflection. This would potentially bridge the gap between the finite thinker and the unlimited absolute. What he needed, however, was a logic and a way of thinking that was capable of accounting for such an idea. This was what Hegel worked on in his Jena logic and metaphysics. Through developing the way to conceive of the basic determinations of thinking, he was able to open up new avenues for thinking and therefore also for metaphysics. Drawing on Kant, as developed by Fichte, Hegel began understanding the determinations of pure thinking as inherently relational and holistic. The true infinite is not the actual infinite beyond, but the process of separation and unification of the finite and the infinite. His suggestion for a unification of practical and theoretical philosophy was to understand life itself as a process of self-knowledge. Life brings about an I that opposes itself to it, but this opposition is just as much a realization of life, and thus the I is fully at home in the contemplation of human life. In this way Hegel shifts the focus away from an unintelligible being beyond thinking to life itself. This shift is what enables a full unification of a philosophical system. A condition for this shift, however, is the conception of the opposite of the I as a *determinate negation* and not as an unintelligible other of it. The real "*Anstoß*" of the I is (human) life itself. Life itself is just as self-positing as the theoretical I. Life provides real resistance to the I and is also something that the I can be properly united with.

The determinate negation is also what enables Hegel to make epistemology into a developmental study without having to abandon the aim of truth. Finite consciousness is led to the standpoint of science through a process that embraces the errors and conflicts representative of finite consciousness. The negativity of the process is an appearance of the absolute and we can therefore expect to find it in its positive aspect through a dialectical reversal of this negativity. As I have argued in 4.3, this is the task of the determinate negation that enters when two opposites could have cancelled each other out and left philosophy in skeptical indeterminateness.

By now, we have uncovered two distinct senses of the determinate negation. In the Jena-manuscript it is used to describe how life is both a negation of the I (an opposite of it, similar to Fichte's notion of a not-I) as well as something that is positively determined on its own. The emphasis here is on the determinate negation as something that excludes its other; it is a negation that has a reality of its own. It can be noted that the opposition in question, i.e. that of the theoretical I and life, is later resolved into a unity when the infinite I and absolute spirit develop, but in the way Hegel uses the term, life, although a negation of the theoretical I, is still determinate. The way the determinate negation is used in *PhG* is, however, different. It comes as the answer to the skeptical nothingness that threatens a philosophy that gives equal recognition to two opposing views. It is therefore not itself in opposition to a specific view, but mediates between two preceding opposed views and the resulting new determination that arises from them.

At the time of publication of *PhG*, Hegel had not yet made any public attempt at justifying the logical principles that were involved in the determinate negation as he used it in that work. This was a task he later fulfilled with *WdL*, but, as we shall see, there he introduces even further senses of the term. This seems to indicate that Hegel used the notion of a determinate negation according to context, making different points with the same basic conceptual operator. In general, I believe, this has to do with his full transformation of what determination means in a philosophical context. Firstly, he endorsed the view that oppositions are relational in the sense that an equal amount of reality is always found on both sides. This is an idea Hegel inherited from Kant and Fichte. However, secondly, he also connected this idea to the antinomical nature of reason. The negativity that arises from dialectics has a positive and determinate side, where opposites are unified. In addition, determination becomes a process, which means that philosophy is no longer about finding out which relations of exclusions exist between properties and finding contradictions in arguments in favor of specific positions. In making this new form of process of determination explicit, Hegel makes use of the vocabulary

of traditional metaphysics and logic. Indeed, he believes the possibility of a developmental approach to determination has been inherent in philosophy ever since its origin in ancient Greece. However, in order to show this, and to provide a thorough justification for it, he had to transform the way we think of logic and metaphysics. This became the task of *WdL*.

PART 2

The Determinate Negation in the Science of Logic



Determinate Negation within the Program of *WdL*

Hegel makes use of the term “determinate negation” three times in *WdL*. In the first instance the term is used within a passage that is dense but nonetheless often quoted. Within this passage the determinate negation is presented as the way out of the impasse that arises when thinking lets opposites play out against each other, resulting in contradiction and nothingness or indeterminacy. The passage in question is very rich in content: It gives an overview of the program Hegel has for *WdL*, how it relates other conceptions of logic in his time, what the specific nature of his own logic is, and what contribution Hegel thinks it will make to a philosophical understanding of logic in general. It also gives an overview of the whole movement of pure thought, i.e. the *method* of *WdL*. I will present a detailed analysis of this passage, in particular the parts of it that state what the determinate negation is. This analysis provides a background for selecting parts of *WdL* that need closer investigation.

Hegel also mentions the determinate negation explicitly in a comment on the *privative negation* and in the presentation of the logic of essence. In these instances “determinate negation” is mainly used in a logical context concerned with the actual interpretation of the determinations of negation and essence. Nonetheless, both represent important stages within a dialectical procedure of determination and therefore can be understood within the methodical context. I start with the programmatic and methodical considerations and progressively elaborate these through the analysis of the actual determinations of the logic. Then I give a comprehensive account of the method as such and how the determinate negation, in its various forms, functions within it. Finally, I will give an overview of the consequences I believe my interpretation has for the overall conception of Hegel’s philosophy.

WdL is as notoriously difficult as it is important to Hegel’s philosophy. In it, Hegel justifies the development of a dialectical method from pure thinking alone, while at the same time fulfilling the aim of a critical revision of metaphysics. For us it is important to get a grip on exactly how Hegel placed the determinate negation within the program of *WdL*. In the following I will first treat the program in general, then go into an a sentence-by-sentence analysis of the passage within which the term “determinate negation” appears for the first time in the logic. This analysis will be elaborate not only because Hegel speaks directly about the place of the determinate negation within the method, but also because this passage contains the most comprehensive description of what exactly Hegel means by “determinate negation” in his philosophy.

Before we begin, here is a general note on the special meaning of “negation” and “determination” in Hegel’s philosophy: First of all, we are not dealing with negation in the sense of judgments that deny. What Hegel means with “negation” can be expressed in sentences that are denials, and such sentences can indeed convey speculative movement (something which Hegel establishes through his doctrine of judgment in *WdL*), but what he is concerned with in *WdL* is the pure conceptual content. This content cannot be adequately represented by any single sentence (such as a principle). Secondly, negation for Hegel means both a process and the result of a process. A negation is something that “happens to” something, an immanent change, which gives a result that is itself something specific. The same ambiguity is present in “determination”; it is both a process of making something more determinate as well as the specific result of such a process. For a comparison of Hegel’s way of using the terms “determination” and “negation” with the traditional way (as represented by Kant), see 10.3.

6.1 The Need for a Reworking of Logic

It was common in the time of Hegel to discuss the claim, originally made by Kant, that logic – as the study of correct reasoning – had not made any progress since Aristotle, and that this is unproblematic, since Aristotle had already covered the whole field and said everything that was necessary about the formal aspect of deductive inference.³⁰⁷ Hegel agrees with the view that logic has not undergone any changes (for the better) since Aristotle. When compared to the progress the human spirit has made in other fields, logic has stood still. Hegel takes this as a reason for claiming that logic is in need of a reworking (*Umgestaltung*).³⁰⁸ It is not immediately clear why he believes this to be the case. It might seem to be grounded in a straightforward belief in progress. But why must logic progress? Can it not be the case that the reason for why no progress has been made since Aristotle is that the basic structure of reasoning is both simple and eternal? Furthermore, Hegel complains that books on logic are not only dry, they even omit parts of Aristotle’s logic.³⁰⁹ So in a sense logic even appears to be regressing.

307 Cf. Fries, Jakob Friedrich: *System der Logik*, Heidelberg: C.F. Winter, 1837, p. 1. This can still be regarded as a controversial issue, as evidenced by the works of, for instance, Michael Wolff and Fred Sommers.

308 TWA 5:46=GW 21:36.

309 TWA 5:46=GW 21:35.

Still, these are not reasons for wanting a *reworking* of logic. A somewhat more substantial claim is that the dead, abstract shape in which logic finds itself does not correspond to the advanced state of the human spirit. But maybe the abstract, dry appearance of logic simply comes from the nature of logic itself? The deeper reasons for Hegel's proposal of a reworking must come from the fact that he believes that logic is much more than it seems to be, that it is the innermost nature both of nature itself and the human being in its pure form. I think it is reasonable to claim that Hegel's proposed idea of a reworking of logic must be seen not so much in the light of the reasons he has for his dissatisfaction with the logic of the time, but rather in the light of his conception of a complete expansion of the field of logic into the field of metaphysics – or the incorporation of metaphysics into logic – which comes as a result of the revival of the idea that thinking is the innermost nature of things, their essence. But this only begs the question – if it is presupposed that logic is something much more than deductive inference, then naturally it will appear to be unsatisfying when it is presented as just that.

The most substantial reason Hegel gives for why the shape of logic in his time is unsatisfactory is that it persists in being an enumeration of fixed forms of thought, arranged in an external manner, and, furthermore, that its method is unscientific, or at best empirical. Of special importance is also, as will become clear in what follows, that thinking is, through its own innermost nature, led into contradiction with itself.

In the 1816-edition of *WdL*, Hegel mentions Jakob Friedrich Fries's *System der Logik* as a recent example of the unsatisfactory treatment of logic.³¹⁰ Hegel calls the idea on which it is based so shallow that he does not need to take it into consideration. He does not tell us what the idea is, and in the 1832-edition of the doctrine of being the comment has been removed. Fries's *System der Logik* can, as an attempt at expanding the field of logic beyond formal deduction, be seen as a competitor to Hegel's *WdL*, standing in the tradition of psychologizing empiricism, which fundamentally opposes Hegel's approach to logic. It can, however, be fruitful to look into what the competition is saying. This will give us a clearer picture of what is characteristic of Hegel's program.

On what idea is Fries's *System der Logik* based? It is based on making the philosophical logic in the tradition of Aristotle a part of *anthropological* logic, which in turn is a part of philosophical anthropology.³¹¹ Anthropological logic asks:

³¹⁰ For a more in-depth, historical and systematical treatment of the relationship between Fries and Hegel, see Burkhardt, Bernd: *Hegels "Wissenschaft der Logik" im Spannungsfeld der Kritik*, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag 1993, pp. 180–204.

³¹¹ Fries, Jakob Friedrich: *System der Logik*, Heidelberg: C.F. Winter 1837, p. 4.

Wie kommen Begriff und Denken unter die Thätigkeiten des menschlichen Geistes? Wie verhalten sie sich zu den übrigen Thätigkeiten des Erkennens und wie stimmen sie mit diesen zur Einheit der lebendigen Thätigkeit unsers Geistes zusammen?³¹²

Philosophical logic is, according to Fries, so poor in its content, that it is completely dependent on anthropological claims. Not only is it the case that all concepts in the end get their content from immediate knowledge (i.e. intuition³¹³), *all* philosophical principles can be reduced to “anthropologischen auf Erfahrung beruhenden Voraussetzungen.”³¹⁴ Fries, however, rejects both the self-satisfied reason that is representative of Aristotelian demonstrative logic, as well as the full reduction of logic to empirical psychology. Fries praises Kant for trying to unite these opposing traditions, but adds that since Kant did not know how philosophy relates to philosophical anthropology, Kant regrettably claimed that logic cannot presuppose any psychological principles. Fries agrees that logical principles cannot be *proved* through experience – they can, however, be *deduced* from experience. Deduction is a form of justification, which comes in three forms for Fries:

[...] entweder Beweis, daß heißt Begründung eines Urtheils durch andere Urtheile, oder Demonstration, Begründung eines Urtheils aus der Anschauung, oder Deduction, Begründung eines Urtheils aus der Theorie der erkennenden Vernunft.³¹⁵

Fries is, as Kant, confident that all logical laws can be shown to depend on forms of judgment. Judgments are themselves, as one of the activities of mind, part of anthropological logic and not philosophical. Logical principles, such the law of non-contradiction, can be led back to (deduced from) judgment, or, more precisely, the inner, psychological experience of repetition, which they ultimately rely on according to Fries’s anthropological theory of knowing reason.³¹⁶

312 Fries, Jakob Friedrich: *System der Logik*, Heidelberg: C.F. Winter, 1837, p. 3.

313 Ibid., p. 132.

314 Ibid., p. 5.

315 Ibid., p. 310.

316 Ibid., p. 136f: “Das Wichtige in dieser Lehre von den Denkgesetzen ist die Einsicht, daß sie alle aus demselben anthropologischen Verhältniß der Wiederholung meiner Gedanken durch die Reflexion vermittelt des Prädicates im Urtheil entspringen, also nur durch die Urtheilsform ihre Bedeutung erhalten.” This is elaborated in the following way

In the second edition of *System der Logik*, Fries explicitly comments on Hegel:

Herr Hegel hält den Umfang, welcher hier der Logik gegeben ist, für zu eng und stellt diese Wissenschaft als subjective Logik nur als zweyten Theil mit der Ontologie, die er objective Logik nennt, zusammen, indem er ungefähr Kants transcendente und analytische Logik in eine Aufgabe vereinigt. Da mir aber noch immer die Kantische Unterscheidung analytischer und synthetischer Urtheile für die Eintheilung der Philosophie in Logik und Metaphysik das Entscheidende bleibt: so hat dieser Gedanke für mich keine Anwendbarkeit.³¹⁷

This brings us to the final point of Hegel's dissatisfaction with the treatment of logic: Thinking, in its investigation of itself, cannot presuppose any distinctions such as the one between analytical and synthetical judgments. First of all, the notion of judgment presupposes a concept of a judging subject, something that is judged, etc., and secondly, the method of *WdL* will show itself to be both analytic and synthetic. Hegel seeks a radical form of presuppositionless logic. Presupposing any distinctions such as synthetic and analytic will make the process of development of the logic contingent exactly upon this distinction.

How exactly does the distinction determine a logic/philosophy, and how does that show itself in Fries' *System der Logik*? In the end, Fries' logic is, because of its reliance on *introspection*³¹⁸ and *feeling of truth*,³¹⁹ fundamentally alien to what Hegel is undertaking in *WdL*. Although Hegel sometimes points

(Fries, Jakob Friedrich: *System der Logik*, Heidelberg: C.F. Winter, 1837, p. 135f): "Das Verhältniß zwischen Subject und Prädicat im Urtheil führt uns wieder auf eine Wiederholung unsers eigenen Gedankens. Im Subject ordne ich Vorstellungen einem Begriff unter, im ganzen Urtheil wird die Unterordnung der unter dem Subjectbegriff stehenden Vorstellungen unter das Prädicat gedacht. Halte ich nun also im Subject und Prädicat eines Urtheils dieselbe Vorstellung fest, so liegt darin eine bloße Wiederholung meines eigenen Gedankens. Daraus entspringt erstens der Satz der Identität: einen Begriff, den ich im Subject eines bejahenden Urtheils denke, kann ich auch in das Prädicat desselben setzen. Z.B. "Jeder Mensch ist ein Mensch." Zweytens, der Satz des Widerspruchs: widersprechende Vorstellungen lassen sich nicht verbunden denken, oder: wenn ich einen Begriff im Subject eines verneinenden Urtheils denke, so kann ich sein Gegentheil in das Prädicat setzen. Z. B. "Kein Sterblicher ist unsterblich". Philosophisch ausgesprochen sagt der Satz der Identität: Jedes Ding ist das, was es ist, und der Satz des Widerspruchs: Kein Ding ist das, was es nicht ist."

³¹⁷ Ibid., pp. VIII–IX.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 267ff.

out that the ground and object of his logic is thinking itself,³²⁰ this activity is for Hegel not be understood within an anthropological framework, but as an objective self-unfolding of something that we, as subjective thinkers, must be guided by, even though we also – as thinkers – productively partake in this unfolding in ourselves. Any philosophy, any logic, that relies on anthropology will, for Hegel, remain determined by the presuppositions inherent in the opposition of consciousness.

Although there are different versions and editions of Hegel's logic, the basic program of making logic into a *science* remains the same since its first publication in 1812. This is evident by the fact that the introduction to *WdL* remains the same, with only a few minor changes in the details (such as that he leaves out a reference to Fries' *System der Logik*). As we will see, the most defining feature of the program is its method, which Hegel is convinced is the "only true" one (admitting, however, that he cannot deny that it is capable of much more perfection, at least on the level of its details).³²¹ This gives us a clue about how to interpret the different expositions and revisions of the logic. Because the method and its content are not separable in a way that is comparable to other sciences, any improvement on the more detailed level of the logic, such as the arrangement of the determinations, can be seen as an improvement to the method as well. Still, these must be seen as changes to its particular content, while the general structure remains the same.

Hegel starts by comparing the science of logic with other sciences. Other sciences have both a presupposed object of study, a presupposed context as well as a presupposed method. The objects and conceptual context, including for instance the rules of reflection and the very idea of science, are already given. The science of logic can make no such presuppositions. Rather, the concept of science (in the sense of methodically informed knowledge) is itself both a part of and a result of the logic. Moreover, other sciences presuppose that method and object are fundamentally separate. The scientist makes use of a method on objects that are already given. The method is understood as a product of the human intellect and a guide in the acquisition of knowledge. In contrast, the science of logic does not presuppose any specific idea of a method. At first there are no objects that the scientist can apply any method to. "Object" and "method" are concepts that will arise within the process of the logic. The main point is that the logic makes an absolute beginning. It neither presupposes an object inside or outside of it. It begins with itself, with pure thinking directing its activity towards itself. Thinking gives itself content

320 TWA 8:63=Enz. §17 and V 11:5: "Das Denken ist die absolute Grundlage des Gedachten."

321 TWA 5:50=GW 21:38.

through itself.³²² The rules of thinking that other sciences rely on and take for granted are a part of the content of the science of logic. Such rules have their place but are also criticized and shown to be of limited use. Since they are not *true* in the specifically Hegelian sense, they do not have the absolute validity that they are considered to have in other sciences.

The science of logic must therefore not only create its own object, it must also create the conceptual context of the science. For instance, the categories of reflection may be part of the natural repertoire of thinking, but cannot be taken for granted as norms that thinking unquestioningly has to follow when examining itself. Hence in the beginning, it is an open question if they will ever be justified; the failure of conceiving the determinations of being according to the norm of the understanding, i.e. according to the categories of reflection, may be taken to point out that they only have a limited use when it comes to a proper conceptual grasp of the movement of thinking that shows forth even in the simplest determinations of the logic. What the logic aims at is to establish a context within which any object can be thought, including thinking, but not just any thinking or thinking as such, but thinking in its truth. This is, however, first reached with the idea of an absolute method when the conceptual context, or the framework, of particular determinations necessary for the true treatment of truth has been developed.

Such comparisons between the science of logic and other sciences only give us a very rough idea of the nature of this logic. The comparison is only in contrast and comes about through pre-conceived notions. Again, the science of logic can rely on no such presuppositions. It may also be doubted that the concepts have any clear meaning in themselves, which is precisely one of the points of dialectics, namely to reveal the relational aspect of any particular determination of thinking. And it goes deeper than that. Even the *concept of the concept as such* must be clarified. The pure thinking that the science of logic takes as its beginning is also to be the beginning of everything, or at least the logical structure of anything that can be something for conceptual thought. When the science of logic is described externally it is not really present as what it is supposed to be, as that which allows for a conceptual description of anything at all. It is *in* everything, both the description and the object described. It then becomes unclear if it can appear to us as it is in itself. Can the precondition for all descriptions be made to appear in any specific description? Hegel's answer is yes, but only through the logic, only through the actual exposition of the movement of pure thinking.

322 See TWA 8:63=Enz. §17.

It follows from this that the introduction to the science of logic will have a very limited significance. It can neither justify the concept of logic in general, its particular determinations, nor any form of method that is contained in it. Its only aim is “durch einige Erläuterungen und Reflexionen in rasonierendem und historischem Sinne den Gesichtspunkt, aus welchem diese Wissenschaft zu betrachten ist, der Vorstellung näherzubringen.”³²³ It should be clear that any reader of the science of logic starts from another standpoint than that of the logic. The introduction can, however, give the reader an idea of what this standpoint is. It cannot force the reader into such a standpoint, and it cannot make a decisive argument that such a standpoint is justified. The way which Hegel introduces the matter is by showing how the *science* of logic fundamentally differs from traditional logic.

The common conception of logic is that it separates the form of thinking from its content and concerns itself only with the form. Logic gives an account of certain ways by which we reach the truth, but does not itself say what the truth is. Actual truth is only present as far as content is also taken into account. This corresponds to the current notion of formal logic, where logic is concerned with the truth-preserving structure of inferences. Logic does not say anything of the actual truth-value of its propositional variables. In order to infer truth, the subject needs not only the rules of inference, but also some form of input that decides the truth-value of the basic propositional variables. Hegel has three remarks to this way of conceiving logic:

1. It is not the case that logic does not have content. The content of logic is thinking itself. In particular: The rules of thinking, such as the law of identity and the various forms of correct inference. (In Hegel's logic also: The basic determinations of thinking).
2. Formal logic, as specified above, rests on certain, presupposed, but ultimately invalid notions. Notions that, as Hegel states, already have begun to dissolve – probably beginning with Kant's Copernican revolution – and indeed should fully disappear, so that logic can be conceived from a higher standpoint and in a new form.³²⁴ The invalid notions are:
 - a. There exists a separate world outside of thinking, from which thinking retrieves its content.
 - b. Thinking is secondary to the object; only the object is real of itself.

³²³ TWA 5:36=GW 21:27.

³²⁴ TWA 5:36=GW 21:28.

- c. Truth is correspondence between thinking and its object, where thinking must “nach dem Gegenstande sich fügen und bequemen,”³²⁵ i.e. thinking must represent the object and not the other way around.
- 3. When form and matter are thought of as fundamentally separate, they become two independent spheres, so that thinking never actually reaches over into reality. Its accommodation and representation of the object is on a closer analysis only a modification of itself, such that in the end the object becomes an opaque “jenseits des Denkens.”³²⁶

Clearly then, the conception of logic against which Hegel is here taking a stand has its root in the opposition of consciousness. It may be that logic conceived on the grounds of the opposition of consciousness is both common and natural, but they are nonetheless prejudices that block the way into the standpoint of the science of logic. Furthermore, point 2 also reveals a notion of history involved in Hegel's program for his logic. Something new and important is about to happen with the establishment of a new science of logic. The invalid notions have begun to dissolve, in part due to Kant, but also due to the later German Idealists. It is time now, Hegel claims, for the invalid notions to fully disappear. This had also been what he set out to do with *PhG*. Hegel aimed at giving a definite critique of philosophy's entanglement in the opposition of consciousness, leading up to a conception of absolute knowledge, which is realized in its pure form as the science of logic.

This must not be understood as a simple story of progress. The ancient metaphysical view that thoughts make out the essence of things is in a sense higher than the modern, reflective outlook, where thoughts are secondary over against reality and incapable of producing any content of their own. The modern regression has, however, led to a new elevation. This elevation has its roots in the Kantian insight that the determinations of the understanding *necessarily* are in conflict with each other. Reflection contains two opposed activities: Separating and relating. Reflective understanding separates and fixates certain determinations. When the task is to relate them, reflection enters into the sphere of reason. This gives rise to the conflict with the understanding, since relation is essentially alien to the understanding. However, in Kant's philosophy, the real significance of this is not realized. We will enter into the more specific aspects of the relationship between Hegel and Kant later on. For now it should be noted that Hegel intends his science of logic to both

325 TWA 5:37=GW 21:29.

326 TWA 5:37=GW 21:29.

realize and go beyond transcendental philosophy. A consistent transcendental philosophy rightly disposes of the notion of a thing in itself, but it also needs to let the content of reason exhibit itself fully through itself in an objective manner.³²⁷

Furthermore, one can claim that logic in a purely formal mode is an insubstantial science. Logic itself does not contain truth. Rather, it relies on something external to it. It teaches us how to reason, but not anything about actuality. This is, for Hegel, not a fault that lies in formal logic itself, but in the way it is treated. What Hegel seeks is an “organic unity” that is able to relate and unite the abstract determinations of thought that is the product of reflective understanding. This he finds in logical reason, a reason which “alle abstrakten Bestimmungen in sich zusammenhält und ihre gediegene, absolut-konkrete Einheit ist.”³²⁸ Reason is now itself the real – this standpoint of the science of logic – and from this standpoint the invalid notions of traditional logic can be replaced by valid ones: Thinking does not rely on an external world for its content; it receives its content from itself. Thinking is not secondary to the object; thinking creates its object. Thinking must not direct itself according to any object in order to reach truth; thinking bears truth in itself.

6.2 The Speculative Determinate Negation and the Method of Logic

We have now established a sufficient interpretative context to allow a close analysis of the passage in which the determinate negation appears. I will analyze each sentence, 14 in total, and give a closer analysis of each of the characteristics of the determinate negation as it is described in this passage (sentence 11, points [a]-[d]). The whole passage is as follows:

[1] Damit, daß dies tote Gebein der Logik durch den Geist zu Gehalt und Inhalt belebt werde, muß ihre Methode diejenige sein, wodurch sie allein fähig ist, reine Wissenschaft zu sein. [2] In dem Zustande, in dem sie sich befindet, ist kaum eine Ahnung von wissenschaftlicher Methode zu erkennen. [3] Sie hat ungefähr die Form einer Erfahrungswissenschaft. [4] Erfahrungswissenschaften haben für das, was sie sein sollen, ihre eigentümliche Methode des Definierens und des Klassifizierens ihres

327 TWA 5:41=GW 21:31.

328 TWA 5:41 f.=GW 21:32.

Stoffes, so gut es geht, gefunden. [5] Auch die reine Mathematik hat ihre Methode, die für ihre abstrakten Gegenstände und für die quantitative Bestimmung, in der sie sie allein betrachtet, passend ist. [6] Ich habe über diese Methode und überhaupt das Untergeordnete der Wissenschaftlichkeit, die in der Mathematik stattfinden kann, in der Vorrede zur Phänomenologie des Geistes das Wesentliche gesagt; aber sie wird auch innerhalb der Logik selbst näher betrachtet werden. [7] Spinoza, Wolff und andere haben sich verführen lassen, sie auch auf die Philosophie anzuwenden und den äußerlichen Gang der begrifflosen Quantität zum Gange des Begriffes zu machen, was an und für sich widersprechend ist. [8] Bisher hatte die Philosophie ihre Methode noch nicht gefunden; sie betrachtete mit Neid das systematische Gebäude der Mathematik und borgte sie, wie gesagt, von ihr oder behalf sich mit der Methode von Wissenschaften, die nur Vermischungen von gegebenem Stoffe, Erfahrungssätzen und Gedanken sind, – oder half sich auch mit dem rohen Wegwerfen aller Methode. [9] Die Exposition dessen aber, was allein die wahrhafte Methode der philosophischen Wissenschaft sein kann, fällt in die Abhandlung der Logik selbst; denn die Methode ist das Bewußtsein über die Form der inneren Selbstbewegung ihres Inhalts. [10] Ich habe in der Phänomenologie des Geistes ein Beispiel von dieser Methode an einem konkreteren Gegenstande, an dem Bewußtsein, aufgestellt. [11] Es sind hier Gestalten des Bewußtseins, deren jede in ihrer Realisierung sich zugleich selbst auflöst, ihre eigene Negation zu ihrem Resultate hat – und damit in eine höhere Gestalt übergegangen ist. [12] Das Einzige, um den wissenschaftlichen Fortgang zu gewinnen – und um dessen ganz einfache Einsicht sich wesentlich zu bemühen ist –, ist die Erkenntnis des logischen Satzes, [a] daß das Negative ebensosehr positiv ist oder [b] daß das sich Widersprechende sich nicht in Null, in das abstrakte Nichts auflöst, sondern wesentlich nur in die Negation seines besonderen Inhalts, oder [c] daß eine solche Negation nicht alle Negation, sondern die Negation der bestimmten Sache, die sich auflöst, somit bestimmte Negation ist; [d] daß also im Resultate wesentlich das enthalten ist, woraus es resultiert, – was eigentlich eine Tautologie ist, denn sonst wäre es ein Unmittelbares, nicht ein Resultat. [13] Indem das Resultierende, die Negation, bestimmte Negation ist, hat sie einen Inhalt. [14] Sie ist ein neuer Begriff, aber der höhere, reichere Begriff als der vorhergehende; denn sie ist um dessen Negation oder Entgegengesetztes reicher geworden, enthält ihn also, aber auch mehr als ihn, und ist die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten. – [15] In diesem Wege hat sich das System der Begriffe überhaupt zu bilden und

in unaufhaltsamem, reinem, von außen nichts hereinnehmendem Gange sich zu vollenden.³²⁹

We are now standing at the center of Hegel philosophical program. Not only the program of *WdL*, but also of the system. The reason for this is that what Hegel describes here is the movement from an abstract beginning, to dialectical differentiation and finally to speculative integration. The conceptual structure of this movement informs not only *WdL* also but the rest of the system. As we have seen, Hegel was in need of a justification of the transition from a skeptical nothingness into a new determination, and in the passage just cited he spells out the general outlines of how he conceives this movement. As it is also made clear, the transition is not just a way of overcoming skepticism, but is representative of the method of philosophical knowledge as such. Up until the point of the speculative unification, Hegel is not bringing anything that goes decidedly beyond critical philosophy, skepticism and the German idealists after Kant. Kant had uncovered antinomies inherent in reason itself, Fichte had developed the concept of reciprocal determination of opposites, and Schelling had posited the idea of an absolute beyond all oppositions. What Hegel is presenting here is a way to both accept and resolve the antinomies inherent in reason, while including and going beyond reciprocal determination into a concrete, speculative unity. All of this depends on the determinate negation; just as far as we are capable of making this idea clear can we make clear what Hegel has to offer as his own, distinct philosophical voice.

[1] *Damit, daß dies tote Gebein der Logik durch den Geist zu Gehalt und Inhalt belebt werde, muß ihre Methode diejenige sein, wodurch sie allein fähig ist, reine Wissenschaft zu sein.*

Hegel most likely has a biblical passage in mind here.³³⁰ Ezekiel 37 describes how Ezekiel is led in the spirit of God to a valley filled with dead and dry human bones. Through the Lord these “Totengebeine” are re-enlivened: “Siehe, ich will Odem in euch bringen, dass ihr wieder lebendig werdet.”³³¹ As the dead bones

329 TWA 5:48 f.=GW 21:37 f.

330 This was pointed out to me by Hans Friedrich Fulda. Hegel also elsewhere seems to refer to biblical passages when treating philosophical issues; see Fulda, Hans Friedrich: *Hegel*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck 2003, p. 71.

331 Here is the whole passage: “Des Herrn Hand kam über mich und er führte mich hinaus im Geist des Herrn und stellte mich mitten auf ein weites Feld; das lag voller Totengebeine. Und er führte mich überall hindurch. Und siehe, es lagen sehr viele Gebeine über das Feld hin, und siehe, sie waren ganz verdorrt. Und er sprach zu mir: Du Menschenkind, meinst

are enlivened and make out a great army, it becomes clear that this is the whole house of Israel standing before them. The Lord then exclaims that he will bring the people of out their graves and lead them back to Israel.

There are consequently two layers of meaning in play here, namely the religious-metaphorical and the conceptual. The metaphorical message is that of enlivening the dead bones of logic. It is a message of hope and optimism on behalf of science in the form of the most general form of human knowledge. The conceptual content that is represented by this metaphor is clear-cut: One part consists of the unsatisfactory state that logic, according to Hegel, finds itself in, and the other part consists of the method that will bring logic out of this state. The dead bones of logic are the minimal, abstract doctrine of concepts, their combinations in judgments and the formal rules of inference. As we have seen, Hegel has several reasons for being unsatisfied with logic understood in this way. Firstly, it is indeterminate in that it leaves out actual knowledge (ontology, metaphysics), secondly, it makes unwarranted presuppositions based on the opposition of consciousness, and thirdly it is arranged in a way that lacks immanent connection. Logic is to gain content, for Hegel, through the inclusion of material that previously belonged to ontology, metaphysics and transcendental philosophy (understood as reflection on the relationship of subjectivity to objectivity). The element that *connects* the minimal, subjective and formal aspects of logic with the contents of these areas is the method.

In order for this connection of the formal and substantial spheres of thought to happen logic must have a method that enables it to be *pure science*. What Hegel means by pure science becomes clearer through his contrast to impure science. We will look further into this soon. For now suffice it to say that it has to do with the notion of presuppositionlessness, i.e. that pure science does not presuppose any specific ontology or metaphysics, not even a pre-given object. Rather, pure science is exclusively self-developing thinking, the thinking that lies at the ground of and animates ontology, metaphysics, formal logic, etc., but does not coincide with any specific instance of any of these. It is also important to notice that Hegel claims that it is only the method that will allow logic to be a pure science. The reason, or reasons, for this, have yet to become clear.

du wohl, dass siese Gebeine wieder lebending werden? Und ich sprach: Herr, mein Gott, du weißt es. Und er sprach zu mir: Weissage über diese Gebeine und sprich zu ihnen: Ihr verdorrten Gebeine, höret des Herrn Wort! So spricht Gott der Herr zu diesen Gebeinen: Siehe, ich will Odem in euch bringen, dass ihr wieder lebendig werdet. Ich will euch Sehnen geben und lasse Fleisch über euch wachsen und überziehe euch mit Haut und will euch Odem geben, dass ihr wieder lebendig werdet; und ihr sollt erfahren, dass ich der Herr bin."

Finally, it should be remarked that it can be hard to fully separate the metaphorical from the conceptual in sentences like these. Hegel understands death as a separation of elements, which together make out a living whole.³³² The dead bones of logic refers to the way in which its elements are simply placed side-by-side without any immanent connection and transition between them. One of the tasks of *WdL* is precisely the enlivening of “the dead bones of logic” through a “living, dialectical soul.”³³³ It would perhaps be to go too far to ascribe to Hegel some form of “vitalism of pure thought.” At the same time Hegel includes the concept of “life” within logic itself, and it is indeed possible to analyze what is going on in the logic as far as its “inner motion” is concerned with concepts that traditionally belong to the study of life.³³⁴ We will return to this issue under point [9] in relation to the concept of self-movement.

[2] *In dem Zustande, in dem sie sich befindet, ist kaum eine Ahnung von wissenschaftlicher Methode zu erkennen.*

The condition in which logic finds itself has already been described. It can be summed up in this way:

1. Its object, conceptual apparatus (e.g. the law of non-contradiction, the distinction between synthetical and analytical judgment) and method is presupposed.
2. It is based on certain false notions, including the general idea that logic is only formal, but also on the related notion that thinking gets its content from a world that is external to it. Furthermore, it is based on the notion that thinking is secondary to the object, such that the truth of any thought relies on it corresponding with an object, which in turn conceives of thinking as incapable of reaching over into reality (at most it gives a true representation of it).
3. Its shape is abstract, in the sense that it is an enumeration of fixed forms, relying on external principles of ordering.

Hegel now goes on to state his reasons for believing that a scientific method can hardly be recognized in the logic of Hegel's time (sentences [3]–[7]):

332 TWA 8:374=Enz. § 216.

333 Cf. V 10:31: “Tot sind jene Prädikate, indem sie einfach, bewegungslos sind: Der Geist ist aber lebendige Bewegung in sich, und dieser Bewegung widersteht die Starrheit solcher Abstraktionen.”

334 Cf. Songsuk, Susan Hahn: *Contradiction in Motion. Hegel's Organic Concept of Life and Value*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

[3] *Sie hat ungefähr die Form einer Erfahrungswissenschaft.*

Logic is now compared to empirical science. It could seem that the point is that logic and the empirical sciences are equally unscientific. If Hegel is referring to all sciences that are based upon experience, i.e. physics, chemistry, biology, this would imply a rather strong devaluation both of experience and of the empirical sciences. In fact, Hegel holds empirical science in high regard, or else he would not have been so concerned with it for instance in his philosophy of nature. Furthermore, he sees “the principle of experience” as containing the “infinitely important determination” that one should only believe anything insofar as one can *unify the presence of oneself with the presence of the content*.³³⁵ Hegel is also convinced that without the modern development of empirical science philosophy would not have progressed further than it had in antiquity.³³⁶ Indeed, Hegel goes so far as to say that the empirical sciences can be understood as a precondition for the development of philosophy from an abstract to a concrete science.³³⁷ What then are the shortcomings of empirical sciences?

The shortcomings concern the way in which the rich content of the empirical sciences are taken up and presented; its content is “immediate and given,” a “side-by-side” manifold lacking inner connection, and therefore its content must be regarded as *contingent*.³³⁸ Experience at most reveals how something happens to be at a certain time and place, something that might just as well have been different, and certainly will be in the future. Scientifically, the challenge is to know why things change, not simply that they change and which stages or forms can be identified in a succession of events. The main lack of empirical science is the lack of a philosophically satisfactory conceptual ordering of its content. This lack is partially overcome through the formulation of “universal determinations, species and laws”³³⁹ – something that is undertaken by the empirical sciences themselves – and finally through the presentation and reproduction (*Nachbildung*) of the content in the form of the free, a priori, “original and completely independent” activity of thinking, which at the same time means giving the content a shape of

335 TWA 8:49=Enz. § 7. By this Hegel probably means that which is expressed through statements such as “I have seen it myself,” but he could also be referring to the need to unify thinking activity with life in general.

336 TWA 20:79.

337 TWA 8:56 f.=Enz. § 12.

338 TWA 8:56=Enz. § 12.

339 TWA 8:57=Enz. § 12.

necessity.³⁴⁰ Such a reproduction of the empirical sciences is a task that Hegel seeks to realize in his philosophy of nature and spirit. But a precondition for this goal of a scientific and philosophical meta-ordering of the content of the empirical sciences is that logic itself is given the appropriate scientific form, since it is the logic that must contain the ultimate source and principle of the ordering.

As will become evident through the interpretation of the next sentence, the “form of empirical science” must be understood as the form of science before the conceptual ordering that gives the content the shape of necessity. Traditional logic is as unscientific as empirical science because the determinations of logic are simply taken up as they are traditionally given, apparently having an order that goes no deeper than the fact that the headings appear one after another. Hegel’s aim is similar to the old wish for a deduction of the most basic determinations of philosophy. What Hegel is seeking is a self-developing whole of determinations, which does not pick up the determinations based on what happens to have become tradition or on what comes to mind.

[4] *Erfahrungswissenschaften haben für das, was sie sein sollen, ihre eigentümliche Methode des Definierens und des Klassifizierens ihres Stoffes, so gut es geht, gefunden.*

The empirical sciences – in contrast to logic – have already found their appropriate method, which consists of *defining* and *classifying*. What Hegel wishes to say through pointing out that the method has been found “so gut es geht” most likely has to do, in part, with the defect (the contingency) that is inherent in defining and classifying, and, in part, with the “defectiveness” of nature itself.

In his discussion of definition in *Enz.*, Hegel considers the scholastic (and, as we have seen Aristotelian and possibly Platonic) notion of definition, where a definition consists of stating the higher genus and the specific difference of the object in question (*genus proximum et differentia specifica*).³⁴¹ Giving a definition belongs to the analytic mode of knowledge, which proceeds from the singular instance to the more abstract universal, identifying, for instance when we are dealing with physical objects, which atoms something consists of. Since a definition essentially involves genus and species it also relates directly to *classification*. Classification in general consists of a hierarchical ordering of concepts, but its specific question is that of how to make a proper division of a genus.

340 TWA 8:58=*Enz.* § 12.

341 TWA 8:381=*Enz.* § 229Z.

Hegel has a critical view of classification but not an entirely negative one. He is convinced that the Aristotelian form of definition and classification is appropriate within the thinking study of nature. For instance, he discusses the division of animals into those with and without a vertebrae, which he thinks has an advantage over Linnaeus's taxonomy,³⁴² and he has a positive attitude towards classifying mammals according to their teeth and claws, since it is through these *weapons* that they secure their self-subsistence.³⁴³ The limits of such classifications are that they only result in definitions that refer to external characteristics, which again are determined by which observations are made and which perspective are held on the matter within a particular scientific field.³⁴⁴ Hegel even goes as far as saying that universals such as "fish" is "als Allgemeines an keine besondere Weise seiner äußerlichen Existenz geknüpft."³⁴⁵ Any investigation of nature from the common ground that the empirical realm constitutes will always face the problem of the externality of the available characteristics. Consequently, every empirically based definition is inherently contingent.

In fact, the manifold of nature is so contingent that its forms cannot be brought into an "absolute system." However, this is not a lack that is only due to the defectiveness of the method of definition and classification, *but is also due to nature itself*.³⁴⁶ Nature is inherently contingent and therefore can be ordered in many different equally good, equally defective ways. There can be no philosophy of nature that in some way completely mediates and transforms the contingency and externality of nature into a systematic whole that exhibits a perfect, conceptual necessity.

The end result is that Hegel understands the method of the empirical sciences as both appropriate and defective; empirical science can do no worse, but also no better. It is the task of philosophy to submit both the results of empirical science and the method of defining and classifying to dialectical critique and speculative reworking. Again, this can only be based on the proper reconception of logic.

We will return to a closer examination of Hegel's view and transformation of the classical ideas of definition and classification later on, but it will also play a part in the following description of the use of geometrical method in philosophy.

342 TWA 9:509=Enz. § 368Z. Also TWA 9/500 f.=Enz. § 368.

343 This is a point that Hegel repeats in different places: TWA 8:382=Enz. § 230Z, TWA 9:501=Enz. 368, TWA 3:190=GW 9:140 f.

344 TWA 8:381=Enz. § 229Z.

345 TWA 9:503=Enz. § 368Z.

346 TWA 9:503=Enz. § 368Z.

[5] *Auch die reine Mathematik hat ihre Methode, die für ihre abstrakten Gegenstände und für die quantitative Bestimmung, in der sie sie allein betrachtet, passend ist.*

Similar to the empirical science, mathematics has found its proper method. The mathematical method is appropriate for mathematical objects, but Hegel thinks that the mathematical method has certain defects. It is generally not appropriate for philosophy and it is not adequate when it comes to the high ideal of science Hegel has in mind for the reconception of logic.

In Hegel's day, pure mathematics consisted of arithmetic and geometry, and was distinguished from applied mathematics. Johann H. Voigt's (1751–123) *Grundlehren der reinen Mathematik* (1791) will serve to give us a better overview of what was understood by pure mathematics and its method at the time. Voigt taught mathematics alongside Hegel in Jena³⁴⁷ and was the dean of the philosophical faculty when Hegel was habilitated.³⁴⁸ Voigt differentiates pure mathematics from applied in that pure mathematics disregards all other properties other than the purely quantitative;³⁴⁹ applied mathematics concerns the use of mathematics for anything in the world that is measurable, for instance the forces of nature.³⁵⁰ Applied mathematics furthermore relies on experience, observation and experiments.³⁵¹ Thus *pure* mathematics obviously means it is *non-empirical*.

Mathematical method in general consists of inventing and relating certain forms of basic sentences and their derivatives (§§ 27–40). The most basic sentences are *definitions*, which are “complete concepts” or “exact determinations.” The definitions are either explanations of a word or of a thing (*Sacherklärung*). An explanation of a word gives an essential definition, containing the marks that differentiates the *definiendum* from everything else. An explanation of a thing says how something arises. Simple sentences derived from the former are *axioms*, while sentences derived from the latter are *postulates*. The truth of these derived sentences rely completely in the “correctness of the explanation” and the “regularity” of the derivation. Some of these

347 Nicolin, Friedhelm: *Briefe von und an Hegel*, (Vol. 4, pt. 1) Hamburg: Meiner, 1977, p. 84.

348 Nicolin, Friedhelm: *Briefe von und an Hegel*, (Vol. 4, pt. 2) Hamburg: Meiner, 1977, p. 292.

349 Voigt, Johann H.: *Grundlehren der reinen Mathematik*, Jena: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1791, § 16, p. 7.

350 Voigt, Johann H.: *Grundlehren der reinen Mathematik*, Jena: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1791, § 17–18, p. 7 f.

351 Voigt, Johann H.: *Grundlehren der reinen Mathematik*, Jena: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1791, § 37, p. 19.

sentences give rise to further sentences that require further *proof*, called *theorems*, or *problems* if they specify a task that is to be *solved*. The ideal order of the sentences is such that everything that is necessary for a proof should be found in the previous sentences.

Some principles border on the trivial. For example, Voigt states that any contingent elements (such as that there are only nine symbols for numbers) should at least be used consistently. Any comments that do not concern the purely mathematical content (such as, for instance, its historical aspects) should be treated separately from the purely mathematical content. The matter can be presented either analytically or synthetically. Either one starts with the most simple and ready (*ausgemachtsten*) sentence and then proceeds to the main sentences, or one starts from the main sentences and proceeds “bis man auf die ersten unleugbarsten Wahrheiten zurück gekommen ist.” Both have their weaknesses, but these are remedied when both procedures are followed.

Mathematical method is, according to Voigt, *the scientific method*:

[...] weil sie nicht bloß bey der Mathematik, sondern überhaupt bey jeder Wissenschaft, wo vollständige Begriffe und allgemeingeltende Prinzipien vor den Sätzen derselben hergehen, statt finden kann, der Gegenstand mag übrigens seyn welcher er will.³⁵²

Voigt here expresses a view that has a long history also within philosophy. Probably at least since Plato, and definitely since the middle-Platonists (e.g. Plutarch), the idea of using a mathematical method as an ideal for the attainment of philosophical knowledge has been of importance.³⁵³ Beginning with Descartes, mathematical method played a major role in rationalist metaphysics, predominantly in the philosophy of Spinoza (Descartes being primarily a representative of the analytical mode of the mathematical method, while Spinoza is a representative of the synthetic).³⁵⁴ In Hegel's time, mathematics was highly regarded for both its general scientific value as well as a method for philosophy. Kant is known for having claimed that “in jeder besonderen Naturlehre nur so viel eigentliche Wissenschaft

352 Voigt, Johann H.: *Grundlehren der reinen Mathematik*, Jena: Akademische Buchhandlung, 1791 § 38, p. 20.

353 Menn, Stephen: “Plato and the Method of Analysis,” in: *Phronesis*, 47(3), 2002, p. 194 ff.

354 Descartes also tried to formulate his philosophy according to the synthetical method at the end of his life, but this work was published posthumously and was not commonly known at the time.

angetroffen werden könne, als darin Mathematik anzutreffen ist,”³⁵⁵ while Schelling explicitly states that he wishes to follow Spinoza’s method for philosophy at the time he was working with Hegel in Jena.³⁵⁶ Hegel therefore faces the challenge of how to justify that the mathematical method is not appropriate for philosophy. In fact, Hegel goes so far as to claim that the mathematical method is only proper to mathematics.

In the exposition of the method at the end of *WdL* Hegel states that because geometry is a science of quantity the most appropriate way of treating it is that of the formal inference characteristic of the synthetic method.³⁵⁷ In general, Hegel’s point is this: Precisely because the synthetical method stays within the framework of the understanding (proceeding from axioms to non-contradictory derivations), it cannot be appropriate for a philosophy that is conscious of the significance of Kant’s critique of metaphysics and the dialectical (contradictory) nature of finite determinations.

The principles of mathematics as a science can be summed up by the following keywords: Simplicity, derivation, proof, order and the separation of essential from inessential. We now turn to the defectiveness which Hegel sees in a scientific procedure that adheres to such a strict and pre-defined set of principles.

[6] *Ich habe über diese Methode und überhaupt das Untergeordnete der Wissenschaftlichkeit, die in der Mathematik stattfinden kann, in der Vorrede zur Phänomenologie des Geistes das Wesentliche gesagt; aber sie wird auch innerhalb der Logik selbst näher betrachtet werden.*

In *PhG* Hegel draws a distinction between knowledge in relation to the becoming of the outer existence (*Dasein*) and the inner nature (*Wesen*) of the thing. Mathematical knowledge only deals with the outer existence, while philosophy deals with both. The becoming of a mathematical object is its construction. Construction acquires significance for knowledge when it is part of the proof of a theorem. However, Hegel thinks that proof in mathematics has nothing to do with the inner nature of its objects. The proof is something we require, subjectively, for our knowledge of the truth of a theorem. For philosophical knowledge proof is contained in the result of a process of knowledge (think of absolute knowledge containing the process of its own becoming in it), while for mathematical knowledge a proof of a theorem is external to the content of the theorem itself.

355 *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaften*, AA IV: 470.

356 SSW IV:112.

357 TWA 6:535=GW 12:226.

The problem Hegel sees with mathematical method in relation to proof and construction is that the process is not immanent; the content of the sentences of the proof and construction is *false* because they do not relate necessarily and immanently to the content of the sentence of the theorem that is to be proved. The construction of a triangle uses other mathematical entities such as the line and point in order to get to the triangle and at the end the triangle must be drawn out, since it is only partially contained in the other figures. This is then the *first* major lack of the mathematical-geometrical method:

Sie geht nicht aus dem Begriffe des Theorems hervor, sondern wird geboten, und man hat dieser Vorschrift, gerade diese Linien, deren unendlich andere gezogen werden könnten, zu ziehen, blindlings zu gehorchen, ohne etwas weiter zu wissen, als den guten Glauben zu haben, daß dies zur Führung des Beweises zweckmäßig sein werde. Hintennach zeigt sich denn auch diese Zweckmäßigkeit, die deswegen eine äußerliche ist, weil sie sich erst hintennach beim Beweise zeigt.³⁵⁸

The first lack concerns its method; the second concerns its content, namely quantity. Since quantity is an “inessential, non-conceptual relationship” its method cannot proceed immanently. The quantitative content of mathematics – *space* and *the one* – is of itself non-dialectical.

Space, as it is considered in mathematics, is such that its determinations stand side-by-side, giving only fixed, dead sentences; dead because they do not exhibit self-movement:

Denn das Tote, weil es sich nicht selbst bewegt, kommt nicht zu Unterschieden des Wesens, nicht zur wesentlichen Entgegensetzung oder Ungleichheit, daher nicht zum Übergange des Entgegengesetzten in das Entgegengesetzte, nicht zur qualitativen, immanenten, nicht zur Selbstbewegung. Denn es ist die Größe, der unwesentliche Unterschied, den die Mathematik allein betrachtet.³⁵⁹

In contrast to philosophy the determinations of geometry are non-essentially related. We have the determinations of points, lines, area, etc., and even though a line contains points one does not consider how the point through itself becomes a line. This is, however, done in the dialectical treatment of space in the philosophy of nature. Geometry may presuppose space, while philosophy

358 TWA 3:43 f.=GW 9:32 f.

359 TWA 3:45=GW 9:33.

must show forth the conceptual development of the three dimensions of space.³⁶⁰ Mathematics approaches the conceptual, i.e. the limits of its own determinations, as far as it comes across incommensurables, where the infinite, conceptual relationship (i.e. where the essential opposition and transition of opposite into opposite) is implied.³⁶¹

The mathematical concept of *one* has a similar lack. It is “paralyzed” over against the self-moving, living world, and must reduce it to a quantitative matter in order to make something of it.³⁶² A dialectical treatment of *the one* would claim that it is also an *other*, which one might interpret as $1=<1$ or >1 . But such ideas would put a contradiction at the heart of mathematics and make it useless as a science of quantity. The strength – and weakness – of mathematics is that its determinations are completely non-dialectical.

Contrary to mathematics, philosophy considers:

[...] das *Wirkliche*, sich selbst Setzende und in sich Lebende, das Dasein in seinem Begriffe. Es ist der Prozeß, der sich seine Momente erzeugt und durchläuft, und diese ganze Bewegung macht das Positive und seine Wahrheit aus. Diese schließt also ebensosehr das Negative in sich, dasjenige was das Falsche genannt werden würde, wenn es als ein solches betrachtet werden könnte, von dem zu abstrahieren sei. Das Verschwindende ist vielmehr selbst als wesentlich zu betrachten, nicht in der Bestimmung eines Festen, das vom Wahren abgeschnitten, außer ihm, man weiß nicht wo, liegen zu lassen sei, so wie auch das Wahre nicht als das auf der anderen Seite ruhende, tote Positive. Die Erscheinung ist das Entstehen und Vergehen, das selbst nicht entsteht und vergeht, sondern an sich ist und die Wirklichkeit und Bewegung des Lebens der Wahrheit ausmacht.³⁶³

Hegel's critique of mathematics at this point does not so much concern the defectiveness of a procedure that starts from given definitions, but rather has to do with the way in which less obvious mathematical/geometrical claims are proved, i.e. in an external way, which again is due to the quantitative nature of the subject. The scientific method that Hegel has in mind rather deals with that which is self-moving, that which has the negative or false as a part of itself.

360 TWA 9:44 ff.=*Enz.* §§ 255–256.

361 TWA 3:45=GW 9:33 f.

362 TWA 3:46=GW 9:34.

363 TWA 3:46=GW 9:34 f.

[7] *Spinoza, Wolff und andere haben sich verführen lassen, sie auch auf die Philosophie anzuwenden und den äußerlichen Gang der begrifflosen Quantität zum Gange des Begriffes zu machen, was an und für sich widersprechend ist.*

Both Spinoza and Wolff were prominent rationalists, and even though Hegel seems very dismissive in his claim that they let themselves be “seduced” by the mathematical-geometrical method, he also identifies an important difference between the two, namely that Spinoza’s philosophy contains important speculative elements, while Wolff’s philosophy is a philosophy of the understanding. The first definition in Spinoza’s *Ethics* is that of the *causa sui*, which is a “completely speculative concept.”³⁶⁴ In addition, the two attributes of the single substance that is the core of Spinoza’s philosophy – a further development of Descartes’s idea of substance – become moments of “the *one* absolute essence,” which is “being as the unity of opposites,” which clearly indicates the speculative nature of this idea.³⁶⁵

In his comments on mathematics in *PhG* Hegel focuses on the lack of method as far as it concerns its method of proof. A simple point needs to be added, however, namely that the definitions are presupposed. Hegel makes this clear in his comments on Spinoza in his lectures on the history of philosophy:

Die ganze Spinozistische Philosophie ist in diesen Definitionen enthalten; dies sind aber allgemeine Bestimmungen und so im ganzen formell. Das Mangelhafte ist, daß er so mit Definitionen anfängt. In der Mathematik läßt man es gelten, die Definitionen sind Voraussetzungen; Punkt, Linie werden vorausgesetzt. In der Philosophie soll der Inhalt als das an und für sich Wahre erkannt werden. Einmal kann man die Richtigkeit der Nominaldefinition zugeben, so daß das Wort “Substanz” dieser Vorstellung entspreche, welche die Definition angibt. Ein anderes ist es, ob dieser Inhalt an und für sich wahr sei. Solche Frage macht man bei geometrischen Sätzen gar nicht. Bei philosophischer Betrachtung ist dies aber die Hauptsache. Das hat Spinoza nicht getan.³⁶⁶

That Spinoza relies on the mathematical-geometrical idea of method is a “fundamental lack” of his philosophy. The definitions are simply “taken up, presupposed and not derived.”³⁶⁷ For Hegel, to determine means to indicate

364 TWA 20:168.

365 TWA 20:162.

366 TWA 20:172.

367 TWA 20:167.

both what something is “in itself” (abstractly) as well as how it develops into an other. In other words, philosophy determines dialectically. In contrast, Spinoza simply presupposes axioms such as “what is, is either in itself or in another.”³⁶⁸ The simple question of why this is so is never raised, and Hegel has reasons for believing that any such axiom will be one-sided in the sense that the opposite could be claimed with equal justification (for example “what is, is both in itself and in another,” which, for Hegel, would be a truer principle).

Hegel also considers another lack of Spinoza’s theorems. The theorems are already contained in the definition, which makes the proof “laborious, superfluous torment.”³⁶⁹ This may seem as the same point Hegel makes in his critique of mathematics in *PhG*, but it is not. There the point was that the proof of a theorem is external to the matter, and here the point is that the proof is not needed because it is fully contained in the definition.³⁷⁰

Hegel’s critique of the mathematical method therefore is threefold: (1) The definitions are simply presupposed and the proofs of the theorems/propositions are either (2a) unnecessary or (2b) external to the matter. The theorems are either *too* immanent so as to be superfluous – what Hegel calls “starre Notwendigkeit” – or they bring something alien into the process of the deduction. Philosophical deduction must stand somewhere between the two. What is required is a moment of *self-consciousness and presence of the I within the method*.³⁷¹ Finally, Hegel rejects the use of a Spinozist method in philosophy on the grounds that the proposition, the connection subject and predicate, is not fully appropriate for expressing philosophical truth.³⁷²

The reasons for why Spinoza actually chose to use geometry as a model for his philosophy is a controversial issue. Spinoza’s first use of this method was in his recasting of Descartes’ philosophy,³⁷³ but since he disagreed with certain parts of Descartes’ philosophy it seems he did not think the method guaranteed truth. Furthermore, the only work that explicitly discusses method (*Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*) does not discuss the geometrical method. This was an unfinished work, and some claim that it is unfinished precisely because Spinoza had realized that there were serious problems with

368 TWA 20:187.

369 TWA 20:173.

370 This is also pointed out in Hegel’s comments on Spinoza in the lectures on the history of philosophy, see TWA 20:189.

371 TWA 20:189.

372 TWA 20:188.

373 Spinoza, Baruch: *Descartes’ Prinzipien der Philosophie auf geometrische Weise begründet*, Hamburg: Meiner 1978.

his method, in particular in relation to the invention of the definitions.³⁷⁴ This then would fit well together with the first of the main points Hegel has against the geometrical method.

Every point of Hegel's critique of the mathematical-geometrical method of Spinoza would apply to Wolff as well. However, since the *content* of Wolff's philosophy comes from ordinary, non-speculative, non-dialectical notions, Hegel finds little of value in his philosophy. In fact, Hegel sees it as formalistic pedantry, and gives an example from Wolff's *Anfangsgründen der Baukunst*, where proof is given for the sentence that a window must be large enough so that two persons can lay down in it, because (and this is the proof) it is often the case that one goes to the window with another person in order to lie down and look around, and it is the main task of the builder to satisfy the client in every way.³⁷⁵ So much for pedantry.

[8] *Bisher hatte die Philosophie ihre Methode noch nicht gefunden; sie betrachtete mit Neid das systematische Gebäude der Mathematik und borgte sie, wie gesagt, von ihr oder behalf sich mit der Methode von Wissenschaften, die nur Vermischungen von gegebenem Stoffe, Erfahrungssätzen und Gedanken sind, – oder half sich auch mit dem rohen Wegwerfen aller Methode.*

Hegel here signals that what he has to offer as a philosophical method is something that is unparalleled in history. Notice that he is not speaking of the method of the philosophy of logic, but the method of philosophy in general. The claim is that philosophy has, throughout its more than 2000 years of history, lacked a method, and it has had to rely on an imitation of the other sciences. This is not to say that the elements of the method of philosophy have not been present. Its procedures of abstract determination, of skepticism and dialectics, of uniting abstract, opposed determinations in speculative concepts, have been present all along. That which Hegel has to offer is mainly an ordering and integration of these elements into an overall method. In particular it consists of the integration of negative, dialectical reason with its affirmative counterpart, the speculative, which is “[das] erst eigentlich Philosophische.”³⁷⁶

Of course, Hegel does not think that he is singlehandedly responsible for this. As we have seen, Kant's understanding of the antinomies and real

374 De Dijn, Herman: “Concepts of Philosophical Method in Spinoza: Logica and Mos Geometricus,” in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 40(1), 1986, p. 60 f.

375 TWA 6:538 f.=GW 12:228.

376 TWA 4:413.

opposition, and his attempt at giving the categories a systematic treatment, played an important part in the early development of the new method. Fichte can be seen as the one who gave the method its first, concrete and explicit form, even though his philosophy as a whole remained a philosophy of striving, never actually reaching the speculative conception of a unity of opposites. Schelling went too far too fast, unable to find a connection between the speculative and its opposite (reflection/dialectic). He had no notion of a determinate negation, and therefore did not believe such a connection was possible.

In order for philosophy to find its method it must purify itself, in the sense that any given content (including both empirical and a priori determinations) must be removed, so that the pure element of thinking remains. This is the starting point of logic, and through the development of the determinations inherent in thinking a new ideal of science appropriate for philosophy will emerge.

It is not easy to find examples of what Hegel is thinking of when he speaks of the "raw disposal" of method in philosophy ("rohen Wegwerfen aller Methode"). Hegel has a dislike for philosophies that are based on empiricism and psychology, but both are supported by methodical procedures. In his lectures on the history of philosophy Hegel points to Boehme as a philosopher without a method.³⁷⁷ But this is not an example of someone who first possessed methodological knowledge and then threw it away. The words "raw disposal" suggests a previous knowledge of methodological procedures and a more or less conscious, emphatic rejection of, accompanied by a corresponding conscious and determined unmethodical proceeding. It could be asked if not Hegel's own method can be seen as a disposal of method in that it does not presuppose any specific principles. This is partially true, but there is no inherent anti-methodical attitude to be found in Hegel. On the contrary he believes that science is science insofar as it is methodical, and his aim is precisely to develop a *science* of logic. That there is a lack of any specific method in the beginning of a process of knowledge does not mean that a procedure itself is necessarily unscientific; *how* it is scientific, however, can only be fully realized retrospectively. The full absorption into the objectivity of the determinations of thinking is a precondition for the reversal of objectivity and the emerging of subjectivity, and the full realization of the methodical side of the process of thought's self-determining.

Hegel probably believes that a philosophy that consciously rejects method cannot really aspire to be philosophy at all and therefore deserves no place within its history and development. If we look to contemporary philosophy,

377 TWA 20:92.

however, we could for instance point to the inherent *methodophobia* of Rorty's new pragmatism.³⁷⁸ Philosophy without method is not only recognized (although not without controversy), but could be seen as defining where philosophy is at. More defining is perhaps the plurality of ways to conceive of philosophical method.³⁷⁹ The reason for the prevailing methodical pluralism can be seen to have much in common with the Hegelian worry that if one takes over methods from other sciences, this will bring with it presuppositions that are not appropriate for philosophy.

[9] *Die Exposition dessen aber, was allein die wahrhafte Methode der philosophischen Wissenschaft sein kann, fällt in die Abhandlung der Logik selbst; denn die Methode ist das Bewußtsein über die Form der inneren Selbstbewegung ihres Inhalts.*

According to Kant, the exposition of a concept consists of a successive account of its marks through analysis.³⁸⁰ For Hegel the exposition of a concept is also successive, but the "marks" are replaced with "moments," and it is not only analytical, but just as much synthetical (an issue that will be discussed later on in the context of the absolute idea).

In what sense is the method *true*? Hegel differentiates between truth as such and the correctness of representation.³⁸¹ From a philosophical standpoint Hegel would not consider the correspondence of a representation with an external object as an instance of truth. The representation may be correct, but not true. The way of conceiving truth in the sense of correspondence presupposes the framework of the opposition of consciousness, and Hegel believes this framework is self-defeating. One of the tasks of *PhG* is precisely to show that none of the models of truth and knowledge that are presented within the framework of the opposition of consciousness can be realized, since they turn out to contradict themselves. Still, Hegel relies on a notion of correspondence in his conception of truth, but it is a matter of the correspondence of objectivity with the concept. In the context of the logic correspondence between objectivity and concept means the full development of the determinations

378 Hall, David L.: *Richard Rorty: prophet and poet of the new pragmatism*, Albany: SUNY 1994, p. 202 ff.

379 *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (2nd ed. Cambridge: CUP, 1999), has 15 entries on method and methodology, but no overall coherent treatment of philosophical method. Compare, for instance, Kant's "Allgemeine Methodenlehre," AA IX: §§ 98–120.

380 *Jäsche-Logik*, AA IX:142 f., § 105.

381 TWA 8:368=Enz. § 213.

that belong to the concept. At first the concept presents itself as being, then it presents itself as essence (or actually the structure of appearance itself). The result of the process, the truth, is the concept of the concept. Truth here is understood in a way similar to when we claim that something is a true work of art, a true friend, and so on. In such cases, what something is, its being, corresponds to its ideal. In this way Hegel's conception of truth is normative. However, the norm cannot be conceived as something external to the object. Rather, the norm is inherent in the object, develops out of it, and includes its earlier stages as part of the arising whole (concept), so that the correspondence in the end is self-correspondence. This is also the idea of truth that lies behind the metaphor of philosophy as the organic life of a rose that is presented in the preface of *PhG*. The seed (the original philosophical standpoint) inherently strives to become the fully developed rose, which is the truth of the seed. In the same way the different philosophical standpoints have it in themselves to become a totality of standpoints. This totality is then the whole truth, but at the same time the full realization of the original standpoint. In the beginning, however, the original standpoint is false, because it only represents *one* standpoint and not the others that it has in itself to become insofar it aims at truth.³⁸²

When we apply this to Hegel's claim that the method presented in the logic is the *true* philosophical method, then it becomes clear that he must show how the other methods, the methods that are not fully appropriate to philosophy, are still contained in the method of the logic. And this is exactly what seems to be the case. The dialectical-speculative method in Hegel's exposition includes both analytical and synthetical method, and, furthermore, definition, classification (*Einteilung*) and sentence/proposition (*Lehrsatz*). The important task will be to show how the philosophical method is inherent in and develops out of these methodical conceptions. This constitutes a true exposition of the philosophical method. The previous methods that have been used in philosophy are the first objectivity (shape) of the method, and it must be shown that

382 One standpoint, as far as it excludes an other, is false, but falsity also has truth in it: "Der Gegensatz von Wahrem und Falschem ist selbst ein Verstandesgegensatz. Die nächste Synthese, insofern die Reflexion über ihn hinausgeht, ist die Vermischung dieser Bestimmungen, der Satz nämlich, daß an allem etwas Wahres und etwas Falsches sei, was wohl von subjektiven Kenntnissen, in anderer Rücksicht auch vom Endlichen überhaupt gesagt werden kann. Das Wahre der Idee aber ist ganz und an und für sich wahr, und seine Vollkommenheit und Vollendung betrifft, [...] die Ausführung am Einzelnen. Das Falsche aber ist der Widerspruch, ein Wahres wohl in sich zu enthalten, sonst wäre es gar nicht, aber zugleich nur das unaufgelöste Gegenteil desselben zu sein." – V 11:28.

the dialectical-speculative method that develops out of the determinations of the logic also includes and transforms the earlier conceptions of method. In this way the first objectivity, which does not correspond to the concept, is developed into a shape that does, one where there is a full transparency of the concept of the method and its objectivity.

That the method can first be treated as a part of the logic itself (and not in the introduction) is due to the circumstance that logic does not have any given object that it can take up. *Consciousness* must have an object before itself, and at the beginning of the logic there is not even a framework present that allows for the simple presence of an object, a *Gegenstand* (in the sense of something that exhibits resistance against consciousness and therefore independent subsistence). How do we then understand the following statement: “*die Methode ist das Bewußtsein über die Form der inneren Selbstbewegung ihres Inhalts*”? Here Hegel surprisingly allows for a separation of form and content and seemingly introduces the opposition of consciousness again. Was not the point that the logic is based on a cancellation of the opposition of consciousness, as well as a unity of form and content? I think the point is that when speaking of the method in abstraction from any specific content, both the opposition of consciousness as well the separation of form and content is implied. So, when speaking of the method in itself one has already stepped out of the discourse that is internal to the logic. However, in stating that the method is a consciousness of the *form of the self-motion of the content*, one has immediately stepped back into the internal workings of the logic itself; that the content is self-moving means that it is at least not a simple and fixed object of consciousness.

In Plato's *Laws*, book X, self-motion is understood as the origin of all motion and the oldest and mightiest principle of change. Self-motion is furthermore identified with the soul. For Aristotle, self-motion becomes a principle of all life.³⁸³ Hegel shares the view that self-motion is a principle of living beings. Since *life* is a determination that is part of the logic, expressions like “the inner self-motion of the content” cannot be simply metaphorical, as has already been pointed out. Self-motion for Hegel is certainly not spatial movement when it comes to the logic (although this is clearly the sense in which he understands self-motion in relation to organisms³⁸⁴). Hegel speaks of contradiction as “das Negative in seiner wesenhaften Bestimmung, das Prinzip aller

383 Self-motion is not necessarily identical to movement in space, but can mean internal change in an organism, such as metabolism. See Byers, Sarah: “Life as ‘Self-Motion’: Desartes and ‘The Aristotelians’ on the Soul as the Life of the Body.” in: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 59(4), 2006, p. 730 ff.

384 TWA 13:165 f.

Selbstbewegung,” and, furthermore, negativity in the sense of contradiction as drive,³⁸⁵ “der innerste Quell aller Tätigkeit, lebendiger und geistiger Selbstbewegung, die dialektische Seele, die alles Wahre an ihm selbst hat, durch die es allein Wahres ist.”³⁸⁶ The self-motion of the content is the self-determination of thinking through dialectics and contradiction. This is a continuation of the idea of self-motion of the soul and life that is found in antiquity.

In fact, it is clear that there is a deep connection between organic life and logic for Hegel:

In dieser Natur dessen, was ist, in seinem Sein sein Begriff zu sein, ist es, daß überhaupt die *logische Notwendigkeit* besteht; sie allein ist das Vernünftige und der Rhythmus des organischen Ganzen, sie ist ebenso sehr *Wissen* des Inhalts, als der Inhalt Begriff und Wesen ist, – oder sie allein ist das *Spekulative*. – Die konkrete Gestalt, sich selbst bewegend, macht sich zur einfachen Bestimmtheit; damit erhebt sie sich zur logischen Form und ist in ihrer Wesentlichkeit; ihr konkretes Dasein ist nur diese Bewegung und ist unmittelbar logisches Dasein. Es ist darum unnötig, dem konkreten Inhalt den Formalismus äußerlich anzutun; jener ist an ihm selbst das Übergehen in diesen, der aber aufhört, dieser äußerliche Formalismus zu sein, weil die Form das einheimische Werden des konkreten Inhalts selbst ist.³⁸⁷

Science exists through the self-motion of the concept.³⁸⁸ Undoubtedly, self-motion must be viewed as intrinsic to the method of Hegel’s logic. Hegel thinks that revolutions in science are based on fundamental changes in the determinations of our thinking, and the revolution that he announces in the introduction to *WdL* – that of philosophy finally finding its proper method – rests upon making logic and the principles of life come together. Self-motion is inherently a completely speculative concept, much in the same way as the that of *causa sui*: That which is moved is the same as that which moves, the effect is the same as the cause – a unity of opposites.

[10] *Ich habe in der Phänomenologie des Geistes ein Beispiel von dieser Methode an einem konkreteren Gegenstande, an dem Bewußtsein, aufgestellt.*

385 TWA 6:76=GA 11:287.

386 TWA 6:563=GA 12:246.

387 TWA 3:54 f.=GA 9:40 f.

388 TWA 3:65=GA 9:48.

Let us look at the first movement of *PhG* as an example of this. Consciousness starts out with the most simple and basic conception of knowledge, namely that of the immediate presence of a being in time and space. Anything I have before me is the truth: A *this*. The content that is presented is immensely rich as long as it is not reflected upon in thought. As it presents itself at first, consciousness is purely passive in this relation. However, the immediacy of the content is understood to be completely dependent on the I. Not in the idealistic sense that the I creates the content itself, but only that the I is an integral part of any instance of immediate knowledge. There is no *this* for consciousness without an I for which it is; conversely, there is no I without any content to be conscious of. However, this goes against the norm that was laid out for consciousness in the form of sensory-certainty. This norm says that it is only the pure immediacy of being that is the true and essential, such that *this* (that which is for consciousness), can be, even if there is no I. However, when we take a particular instance of sense-certainty there is always an I there in addition to *thisness*. In this way any particular example of sense-certainty cannot realize the original, universal, norm of pure immediacy.

The methodical aspect of this concerns how the immediate presence is divided into two moments of *this* content and *this* I. The immediacy is in fact nothing beyond the relation between these two; the relationship inherently belongs to the immediacy. Something given, a universal, is divided into two particulars that apparently oppose each other. A unity of both determinations is then brought about through a dialectical connection or the showing forth of the interdependency of the determinations. This unity is then sundered again through pointing out that one of its parts is more essential than the other; the truth, for consciousness, belongs to the side of the object and not the I. This continued search for a way to satisfy objectivity within the structure of the opposition of consciousness now gives rise to new attempts at formulating the nature of the objective content, which the I relates to as something it has to take in as it is given. In this case it is the formulating of immediate presence as a *here* and *now*. This is a new beginning that will repeat the movement of the method.

[11] *Es sind hier Gestalten des Bewußtseins, deren jede in ihrer Realisierung sich zugleich selbst auflöst, ihre eigene Negation zu ihrem Resultate hat – und damit in eine höhere Gestalt übergegangen ist.*

The shapes (*Gestalten*) of consciousness in general appear on two levels: On the level described by the headings, i.e. the most general shapes, (*Die Sinnliche Gewissheit, Die Wahrnehmung, Kraft und Verstand*, etc.), and on the level of the

textual appearance, which are the particular, unnamed shapes. These are shapes because at certain points in the text a repetition can be identified. At the beginning we have the two shapes that have already been mentioned, one which takes truth to be the pure, immediate *this*, and the other, which takes truth to be the *here* and *now*. These indexicals are a development of the *this* into a double, spatio-temporal form that is intended to give an account for the original intuition of truth as that which is immediately present to consciousness.

That all of the shapes of consciousness dissolve in its realization (*“in ihrer Realisierung sich zugleich selbst auflöst”*) is a reference to the form of a particular shape, which is the method. The realization of a shape means the *attempt* at actually fulfilling the norm as it was originally conceived. In fact, however, the realization is a negation and therefore not a realization of the norm, but rather the *failure* of realizing it. The shape cannot fulfill what it set out to, and therefore dissolves. Not simply because it cannot live up to the norm in a particular instance, but since the realization *is* the negation of the shape; it lies in the original norm that it must change, become other to itself, and therefore it both realizes itself and disappears or dissolves in its negation.

At this point it is not clear why the negation of a shape of consciousness means that it has passed over into a “higher shape.” We are simply told that these must be equated. What exactly is meant by “higher” is also not clear. It could be claimed that it is plainly metaphorical, that higher means something spatial and in some vague sense also means “better.” I do believe, however, that Hegel has something quite specific in mind here, which concerns the nature of conceptual structures. In his logic, Kant differentiates between higher and lower concepts.³⁸⁹ Higher concepts are more universal. In *PhG*, consciousness is approaching universal knowledge through its experience with the particular shapes of consciousness. Higher stages do, however, contain the lower aspects in them. According to Kant’s doctrine, higher concepts do not contain lower concepts in them, but under them. This means that Hegel implicitly challenges the traditional doctrine with his logic and method. This is something I will go into in detail in my interpretation of Hegel’s doctrine of the concept.

[12] *Das Einzige, um den wissenschaftlichen Fortgang zu gewinnen – und um dessen ganz einfache Einsicht sich wesentlich zu bemühen ist -, ist die Erkenntnis des logischen Satzes, [a] daß das Negative ebensosehr positiv ist oder [b] daß das sich Widersprechende sich nicht in Null, in das abstrakte Nichts auflöst, sondern wesentlich nur in die Negation seines besonderen Inhalts, oder [c] daß eine solche*

³⁸⁹ *Jäsche-Logik*, AA IX: 96 ff., § 9–15.

Negation nicht alle Negation, sondern die Negation der bestimmten Sache, die sich auflöst, somit bestimmte Negation ist; [d] daß also im Resultate wesentlich das enthalten ist, woraus es resultiert, – was eigentlich eine Tautologie ist, denn sonst wäre es ein Unmittelbares, nicht ein Resultat.

It is unclear if Hegel is speaking here of scientific progress in general, in relation to *PhG* or in relation to the logic specifically. Since they are related, it could very well be that he has all of them in mind. *PhG* is an introduction to the logic, but is at the same time animated by the way of thinking that is found and justified within the logic, which again animates Hegel's system of philosophy and his treatment of for instance history and religion in his lectures. The scientific progress of logic that Hegel aims to be undertaking here is furthermore dependent on the resolution of the antinomic structure inherent in reason that was identified by Kant. This resolution will take a specific form in the logic, which will be exemplified in the content of the other sciences as far as they are philosophically reinterpreted on the grounds of the science of logic. This, I believe, is the two-fold sense of scientific progress that Hegel has in mind here. He is not speaking of other sciences and their methods, e.g. natural science and mathematics. These already have their appropriate method. It is philosophy, or more specifically logic, that is in need of improvement. However, this improvement spills over into the other parts of philosophy, relieving them of their contingent nature, which is due to their dependency on a more or less contingent content, such as empirical nature devoid of real conceptuality, arbitrary systems of classification and external definitions.

The core idea of Hegel's new conception of philosophical thinking is contained in the "logical proposition" he now presents. The knowledge of this proposition is the only thing required for scientific progress. It presents a simple insight, but one that still requires effort in order to be grasped. There are four general claims – four *daß*-sentences – that say what the simple insight consists of:

- a. The negative is just as much [ebensosehr] positive (as it is negative).
- b. The self-contradictory (=the negative) does not dissolve into zero [null] (=the abstract negative), but is rather essentially dissolved [auflöst] into the negation of the particular content of the self-contradictory.
- c. The negation of the particular content of the self-contradictory is not *all negation*, but rather a negation of the determinate thing that dissolves [auflöst] itself, and therefore is a determinate negation.
- d. Consequently the result essentially contains that from which it results, which is a tautology, or otherwise it would be something immediate and not

a result. Being a result simply means containing that from which it results.

The main claim of the logical sentence is contained in [a], and is further specified by [b] and [c], which are contrastive claims that show in what sense something negative can be seen to be just as much positive. Claim [d] is a separate claim about what “result” means, but points out another special feature of the determinate negation as Hegel conceives it here.

The *negative* in claim [a] is equated with the *self-contradictory* in claim [b]. Something self-contradictory can in general be understood either as a self-reflectively contradictory sentence such as the liar paradox (“this sentence is not true”), or a person who both affirms and denies the same proposition. The issue is somewhat more complex in relation to Hegel’s logic: Is it a single determination that is self-contradictory when it turns into its opposite, or is it the opposite that is self-contradictory, or both? Furthermore, that which is self-contradictory dissolves. Does this mean that the self-contradictory is only apparently self-contradictory? This could be the sense of “essentially dissolved,” i.e. the self-contradictory is only apparently contradictory, but in essence not. In any case, Hegel contrasts two forms of dissolution, one that has zero or the abstract negative as a result, and one that only negates the particular content of the self-contradictory.

With claim [c] the negation of the particular content of the self-contradictory becomes determinate. However, the negation is not *all negation*, which opens up the question of whether “all negation” is the same as the abstract negation or negation as null/zero. *Because* [somit] the negation is now a negation of the determinate thing, which dissolves, it is a determinate negation. The main challenge is to come to an understanding of what the determinate matter is; if we can do this, we also can state what the reason is for why a negation is determinate within the context of the method. What is the determinate thing (*Sache*) that dissolves? There are two forms of dissolution [auflösen] in play here. We have the dissolution of the self-contradictory and the dissolution of the determinate matter, both of which are closely connected to the determinate negation, but still are not the same. The dissolution of the self-contradictory comes from the dissolution of the determinate thing. The self-contradiction is *active* in the sense that it dissolves the determinate self-contradictory thing, which at the same time dissolves the contradictory. The self-contradictory could be said to belong to the abstractly conceived process of dissolution, or a rest of the understanding that is still active in dialectics. The understanding conceives the result of dialectics as a self-contradiction, while in fact it is the dissolution of the determinate matter, which brings forth the determinate negation.

Claim [d] – the result contains that form which it results – does not seem to follow immediately from what Hegel has claimed so far. Rather, it seems to be a further specification of what the determinate negation is, namely the unity of opposites indicated in sentence [13]. Hegel is, however, saying something general about how he understands what a result is. A result always contains that from which it originates in itself. A result is something mediate; it has a predecessor to which it is essentially connected. If the predecessor is somehow left out of consideration the result is no longer mediated, but something immediate and therefore not a result, but rather something given.

[13] *Indem das Resultierende, die Negation, bestimmte Negation ist, hat sie einen Inhalt.*

This is to say if the result were not a determinate negation it would have no content. What is a negation that has no content? It seems that this is negation as it is usually understood. When I say “person A is not here,” this negation does not have a content in the sense that it says something specific about where A is; the negation would have content if it somehow contained information about A’s whereabouts. I take the *form* of the content that is involved in such a sentence to be that of being spatially located. The sentence can easily be interpreted to be determinate with regard to form. If I say “A is not here,” it can be implied that A is somewhere else. However, this is not necessarily the case, since A might in fact be non-existent (or recently deceased), which means that the sentence is indeterminate with regards to whether or not it is also a negation of the form that is involved. The content of such sentences is always indeterminate, but whether its form is determinate or not must be decided on the grounds of the context in which it presents itself.

Here Hegel is also probably indicating that he is speaking of negation in a way that breaks with tradition. A negation of a reality leaves us without the content of that reality. If we say that the negation actually is another reality, then we have another affirmative content before us. But then we are no longer speaking of the negation. A negation is traditionally a relational determination, always referring to some determinate content that it negates. What Hegel means to say is that the negation he has in mind is not relational in the traditional way but still has content in itself (i.e. not through the addition of an external content referring to a given reality).

[14] *Sie ist ein neuer Begriff, aber der höhere, reichere Begriff als der vorhergehende; denn sie ist um dessen Negation oder Entgegengesetztes reicher geworden, enthält ihn also, aber auch mehr als ihn, und ist die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten.*

The negation – the determinate negation – is a *new concept*. When compared to the preceding negated concept, it is “higher” and “richer,” which, as earlier, does not have to be taken metaphorically, but rather as relating to earlier doctrines of the ordering of concepts. Again, the precise meaning of “higher” and “richer” will be considered within the interpretation of Hegel’s doctrine of the concept, but as a preliminary it can be said that the new concept contains its negated predecessor, which in some way enriches it and is not simply subordinate to it. Hegel here also openly challenges the traditional understanding of a concept, where a higher concept is always poorer in content than a lower. This is closely connected to the notion that Hegel reverses the traditional doctrine of the extent and content of concepts. Both of these questions will be treated in detail later on since it is one of the more problematic aspects of Hegel’s dialectics,³⁹⁰ and is connected to Hegel’s appropriation of the idea of a synthetic universal from Kant.

Furthermore, Hegel identifies the determinate negation with “die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten.” This makes it clear that this determinate negation must be equated with the speculative moment of the method. In fact, for Hegel, speculative means conceiving the dialectical as a unity of opposites or grasping the positive in the negative.³⁹¹ For this reason the determinate negation as it is used here can be called *the speculative determinate negation*.

This exposition of the determinate negation also decisively breaks with the interpretation represented by Robert Brandom and Paul Redding,³⁹² where the determinate negation is *one* side of an opposition. The problem is, however, as I pointed out in the introduction, that Hegel himself sometimes seems to use the term “determinate negation” in a way that is consistent with the Brandom/Redding-interpretation. For instance, Hegel speaks of coldness and darkness as determinate negations.³⁹³ One would be hard pressed not to say that coldness and darkness are the opposites of warmth and light. Therefore it seems clear that a determinate negation is, in certain cases, *one side* of a pair of opposites, and therefore not the unity of them.

A possible way out of this is simply say that there are fundamentally two forms of determinate negations: Some describe *one* side of a pair of opposites

390 Cf. Schäfer, Rainer: *Die Dialektik und ihre besonderen Formen in Hegels Logik*. Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, p. 256 f.

391 TWA 5:52=GW 21:40 f.

392 Brandom, Robert: “Idealism and Holism in Hegel’s Phenomenology,” in: *Hegel-Studien*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001. Redding, Paul: *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007.

393 TWA 5:108=GW 21:89.

and others concern the unity of opposites. Why would Hegel use the same term for such different ideas? Luckily, I don't have to answer this, since my thesis is rather that the determinate negation in Hegel's method has (at least) these two senses: It *is* a unity of opposites and it *is* one side of an opposed pair. This will require some explaining, and the rest of this investigation is dedicated to that. For now, the following can serve as a preliminary outline of an answer: The determinate negation is the unity of a preceeding concept and the opposite that develops out of it, *and* it is the negation of negative reason; it is positive reason. This opens up the possibility of another form of unity of opposites, namely that of negative and positive reason.

The question is, however, whether speculation is not itself is such a unity, i.e. of itself as positive reason and dialectics, its opposite, negative counterpart. Then there would be two unities of opposites in speculation, namely that of the preceding concept and its opposite, and that of the unity of negative and positive reason. These are, however, questions that can only be decisively answered at the end of the analysis of the determinate negation in *WdL*.³⁹⁴ In any case, this opens up a possible new perspective on the determinate negation: It represents not one, but two unities of opposites, and plays a double role in transition from dialectics to speculation: It unites a preceding concept and its opposite, but puts the emphasis on the positive side of reason by negating its negative side. It is negative by being such a negation, but is also positive, determinate, or concrete by being a unity of opposites.

If we see the unity of opposites as a continuation of the resolution of the self-contradictory negative, then it is already possible to see the contours of what exactly the resolution consists of. For there to be a contradiction at all,

394 In A.V. Miller's translation of *WdL*, the passage on the determinate negation in the introduction opens up for another interpretation of which unity of oppositions is in question: "Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* [determinate] negation it has *content*. It is a fresh Notion but higher and richer than its predecessor; for it is richer by the negation or opposite of the latter, therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite." Miller, A.V.: *Hegel's Science of Logic*, New York: Humanity Books 1999, p. 54. The problem here is to identify what "itself" refers to in "the unity of itself and its opposite." Does it refer to the determinate negation or the unity? The sentence allows for two forms of interpretation of unity and opposition in relation to the determinate negation: 1) The determinate negation is the unity of unity (itself) and that which is opposed to the unity. An example could be understanding the subject as a unity of itself and its body. 2) The negation is a unity of the preceding concept and the opposite of the preceding concept. As should be clear, this is the interpretation I am following, and the one which is clear from the grammar in the German sentence: "seiner und seines," which can only refer to the preceding concept.

the contradictory elements must be mutually exclusive in the sense that they are not a unity. When something forms a unity its elements can no longer be contradictory, at least when taken as parts of the unity. So everything rests upon transforming a contradictory opposition into a non-contradictory unity. Inherent in this unity there will, however, be a *rejection* of the (self-)contradictory as (self-)contradictory, which establishes a new, at least apparently contradictory opposition, namely between the (self-)contradictory as (self-)contradictory and the (self-)contradictory as resolved into a unity. That the unity excludes the (self-)contradictory as such means that the determinate negation as an affirmation of one sides of an opposition is fulfilled. This can be seen as a fulfillment of the *finite* aspect of the speculative, an example of *omnis determinatio est negatio*: In order to give the speculative some definite character, in order to make it appear in thought, it must be presented in a way that limits it over against its other moments. If this were not the case, then the speculative would be nothing else than a repetition of the previous moments. Also the unity of opposites always has an opposition in itself, which means that its principle cannot be fully realized as a stable unity. I believe this is the reason why the dialectical process also continues after the speculative moment; this moment can never be grasped fully, but is only realized when there is movement. The need to proceed further than the speculative in this way is nothing other than the need to keep the speculative alive and moving, which is an essential task of dialectics, or at least the speculative *depends* on the negative ground that is laid down by dialectics for its appearance.

[15] – *In diesem Wege hat sich das System der Begriffe überhaupt zu bilden und in unaufhaltsamem, reinem, von außen nichts hereinnehmendem Gange sich zu vollenden.*

The system of concepts is another term for the content of *WdL*. The system of concepts has to be built according to the method as outlined here. The methodical process of determination is a steady progress that cannot be stopped, it is pure (non-empirical) and completely immanent. It is also precisely these points that are often criticized when it comes to Hegel's conception of the determinate negation. First of all, there is the strong rationalistic element present in the notion of pure conceptual determination. This puts Hegel at odds with the general naturalistic and pragmatic tendency within philosophy, arising at around the time of Hegel's death. Tendencies are, of course, not arguments. Still, even many of the internal critiques of Hegel

take issue precisely with the claim to an immanent and necessary progress of the logic.³⁹⁵

The doubt relating to the immanent and necessary progression (“unaufhaltsamem Gange”) of the logic also seem to be well-founded. Why is it not possible to stop the progress of determination of pure thought? Apparently Kant and many with him stopped at the antinomies. Is this not reason enough to claim that the progress in the logic is in the end brought about through the philosophizing subject? Does Hegel bring anything into the process either at the level of pure determination, when first stating what being is, or somewhere along the way, for instance with the determination of *Dasein* or the determinations of reflection? In any case, with his conception of the determinate negation Hegel intends to secure the immanent procedure of the logic and to go beyond the abstract nothing that threatens to results from the contradiction of reason with itself. This is an issue I will return to more extensively in part 9.

6.3 Summary and Preliminary Overview of the Speculative Determinate Negation

After introducing the concept of the determinate negation as a key operator within the program of *WdL*, Hegel goes on to make the point that he believes that though the method is the “only true” one, he cannot go so far as to claim that it is not capable of “noch vieler Vervollkommnung” and “vieler Durchbildung im einzelnen.”³⁹⁶ Since the method and content of the science of logic are closely related, this also means that the content can undergo change, which could be a reason for the rearrangement of the determinations especially of the doctrine of essence in the *Enz.*-logic. Even though it is clear that Hegel might have changed parts of the doctrine of essence and the doctrine of the concept if he had had time to revise them in the way he did with the doctrine of being, the way in which he presents the determinate negation as part of the method in the introduction to the science of logic does not change. There is therefore good reason to believe that the program of *WdL* remained the same since the publication of the first edition of *WdL* and that it is there that the determinate negation as a methodical operator appears in its definite form.

395 E.g. Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls. Hegels spekulative Dialektik in der “Wissenschaft der Logik.”* Paderborn: Schöningh 2001 and Kolb, David: “What is Open and What is Closed in the Philosophy of Hegel?.” In: *Philosophical Topics*, 19(2), 1991.

396 TWA 5:50=GW 21:38.

Furthermore, Hegel brings once again Kant's doctrine of the antinomy of reason into the picture. This indicates that Hegel indeed wants to proceed further from the point at which Kant stopped. That which drives the concept forward is the negative that is referred to in relation to the logical sentence and which the concept has in itself. This is the truly dialectical, in opposition to the falsely dialectical, i.e. the "external, negative action, which does not belong to the matter itself."³⁹⁷ According to Hegel, Kant had rightly understood the significance of dialectics in his exposition of the antinomies, namely that they imply:

[...] die Objektivität des Scheins und Notwendigkeit des Widerspruchs, der zur *Natur* der Denkbestimmungen gehört: zunächst zwar in der Art, insofern diese Bestimmungen von der Vernunft auf *die Dinge an sich* angewendet werden; aber eben, was sie in der Vernunft und in Rücksicht auf das sind, was an sich ist, ist ihre Natur. Es ist dies Resultat, in *seiner positiven Seite aufgefaßt*, nichts anderes als die innere *Negativität* derselben, als ihre sich selbst bewegende Seele, das Prinzip aller natürlichen und geistigen Lebendigkeit überhaupt. Aber sowie nur bei der abstrakt-negativen Seite des Dialektischen stehengeblieben wird, so ist das Resultat nur das Bekannte, daß die Vernunft unfähig sei, das Unendliche zu erkennen; – ein sonderbares Resultat, indem das Unendliche das Vernünftige ist, zu sagen, die Vernunft sei nicht fähig, das Vernünftige zu erkennen.³⁹⁸

Hegel considers it correct that dialectics deals with appearances, but not as something that is simply illusory. The dialectics is, in fact, objective appearance; it *seems* negative, but this is only one side of the matter. The appearance is an appearance of an essence that is related to its appearing side in a way that makes it impossible to separate the two. However, it still seems possible to stay with the abstract-negative side of dialectics; one can reject or remain unconscious of the simple insight that would allow for scientific progress in the way Hegel conceives it. *WdL* is, however, a continuous process of bringing to consciousness the simple insight in its various instantiations. Furthermore, *WdL* does allow for well-founded rejections at certain points throughout the progress; any well-founded rejections can then be met with an attempt at reformulation and revision as far as it is found necessary, resulting in a process of bringing the exposition of the determining activity of pure thinking with the movement of the matter itself. More threatening is the Kantian interpretation of the

397 TWA 5:51=GW 21:40.

398 TWA 5:52=GW 21:40.

antinomies, since it relies on certain ideas and ways of seeing philosophy that Hegel accepts (i.e. that philosophical reason has to perform a critical investigation of itself), while at the same time blocking the transition from dialectics to speculation by being committed to treating the result of dialectics as only negative. I suggest that the best way to interpret Kantian adherence to the negative result of dialectics at the point where it could have become speculation, is as a turn to the understanding just at the point where speculation could have entered.

Admittedly, this draws attention to the subjective aspect of the matter, since it implies that either speculation or understanding are brought in externally, something that would go directly against Hegel's understanding of the matter, namely that the advance from dialectics to speculation is something immanent. The Kantian interpretation of the antinomies does not even consider the possibility of a philosophical speculation in the sense Hegel had in mind. Therefore it does not reject this kind of speculation; it is simply unaware of it. The Hegelian understanding of the Kantian antinomies would therefore be that it represents a limited range of cognitive awareness or a lack of thinking the matter through to its conclusion.

The important point for Hegel is that dialectics has a positive side, namely the speculative: "In diesem Dialektischen, wie es hier genommen wird, und damit in dem Fassen des Entgegengesetzten in seiner Einheit oder des Positiven im Negativen besteht *das Spekulative*."³⁹⁹ As can be easily recognized, the speculative shares two characteristics with the determinate negation – the comprehension of opposition in its unity and the comprehension of the positive in the negative – and because of this, the interpretation of both the determinate negation and speculation in the Hegelian sense will depend upon each other. Furthermore, the determinate negation will rely on an interpretation of dialectics and the possibility of either remaining with its abstract-negative result or proceeding further. A rejection of the possibility of an advancement from dialectics to speculation is also a rejection of the speculative determinate negation.

With his program of a new science of logic, Hegel wishes to differentiate logic from the other sciences through understanding it as a science that has no pre-given object. Rather, in the science of logic the objects are created by pure thinking. As pure thinking specifies its objects, it specifies itself. A pre-given context or conceptual framework is similarly replaced by the notion that the conceptual context necessary for treating any object at all, such as the laws of reflection, arises as part of the self-specifying or self-determining

399 TWA 5:52=GW 21:40 f.

process of thinking. Furthermore, the method is not presupposed as in the other sciences. The method can only be discerned retrospectively. It must be considered as a part of the result of the process of science and not something external to it.

The logic that Hegel has in mind also differs from other kinds of logic in that it is not only concerned with form. Hegel considers the content of his logic to be thinking itself, both its different determinations as well as the movement of thinking inherent in these determinations. In addition, Hegel's program for a new science of logic includes content from what had previously belonged to metaphysics.

Furthermore, he replaces certain false notions about logic or thinking in general with true ones. Thinking is not external to the world, belonging only to the thinking subject, but thinking and being are in their deepest structures identical. This also means that thinking is in no way secondary in relation to the object. Truth does not consist of thought corresponding to an object, in the sense of representing an object. Rather, it is a matter of the correspondence of objectivity and concept, in the sense of something having developed into a full realization of what it is, having its own being in itself. As a consequence, any notion of a thing in itself lying beyond thinking is rejected.

Hegel considers the logic of his time to be abstract and dead, a simple or external enumeration of fixed forms. He thinks logic must be enlivened and become concrete, which means that some principle of inner connection of the material must be found, which also brings some form of organic wholeness to it. This is the principle of dialectics, which allows the fixed forms of thinking to develop from and into each other.

Finally, as we have seen, Hegel claims that philosophy has not yet found its proper method. The other methods available to it are flawed; the empirical sciences rely on given objects, lack a truly conceptual ordering and are ultimately external and contingent. Similarly, geometry relies on presupposed definition and proofs that are either unnecessary or external to the matter. Philosophical science can rely on no such given objects, but must be self-developing and self-moving, immanent and necessary. That which Hegel has to offer is closely connected to Kant's development of dialectics, but with the addition of the recognition of the objectivity of appearance and the necessity of contradiction. The fixed forms of the understanding are seen as being self-contradictory. However, not in a self-defeating way, but rather in a productive way. It brings forth a determinate negation, a unity of opposites, based on the simple but essential insight that the negative is just as much positive. It is this insight that will make science progress in the field of logic. The "simple insight" is, however,

as I have tried to show, rather complex. It brings with it a palette of notions that in part require much elaboration, in part seem to conflict with common and established ways of understanding the laws of thought, and in part seem to contradict each other. These issues can be summed up with the following question, which my further analysis of *WdL* will be based on, and which I will try to answer in the following:

1. How exactly can something negative be positive?
2. What is meant by self-contradictory? Specifically, what is the meaning of the self-contradictory
 - a. as an abstract negation that resolves into
 - i. null?
 - ii. all negation?
 - b. as a concrete negation that resolves into a
 - i. negation of particular content of the self-contradictory?
 - ii. negation of the determinate thing or determinate negation?
3. What is the meaning of the determinate negation as
 - a. a result containing that from which it results?
 - b. a new concept?
 - c. a negation with content?
 - d. a concept that is higher and richer than the preceding one?
 - e. as one side of an opposition?
 - f. a unity of opposites?
4. How does it relate to the immanence, necessity and self-motion of the method?

The most controversial issues or problems involved here are Hegel's understanding of contradiction, his claim that a concept can be at once higher and richer than one that is contained under it, and Hegel's doctrine of mediation or the claim that the negative is just as much positive.⁴⁰⁰ It has been claimed that these problems imply "unüberwindbare Schwierigkeiten"⁴⁰¹ for Hegel's dialectic, and it certainly is the case that any claim to the effect that contradictions can be true, that human beings can have access to an intuitive understanding, that there is a way across the negativity that results from the antinomy of reason are still very much controversial issues. On the one hand, however, there is

400 Cf. Schäfer, Rainer: *Die Dialektik und ihre besonderen Formen in Hegels Logik*, Hamburg: Meiner 2001, p. 256 f.

401 Ibid., p. 326.

somewhat more room today for asking questions about the nature of contradiction along Hegelian lines, but on the other hand, the limits of reason seem to be adhered to just as strongly today as in Kant's day, possibly even strengthened through the more or less complete secularization of reason and complete downfall of the *scientia intuitiva* of metaphysical rationalism.⁴⁰² The criticism of dialectics, however, more often than not, builds on a pre-conceived set of logical determinations that Hegel seeks to challenge through his logic. Because of this any adequate treatment of dialectics must also take into account the logical determinations that it relies on. In my view, it is still very much the case that any dialectics bought at the price of renouncing a dialectical understanding of the fundamental determinations of thinking has little to no chance of defending itself against criticism.⁴⁰³ Before the larger question of the immanent development of the determinations of thought, i.e. the larger task of dialectics, can be treated satisfactorily it is vital to clarify all the complexities and nuances of Hegel's idea of it, including the ambiguity inherent in his exposition of the determinate negation as pointed out above. Clearing up this ambiguity, as well as tackling the criticism of Hegel's idea of dialectics embedded within it, depends on a closer analysis of the determinations of *WdL*, the task we shall now turn to.

402 Gadamer, Hans-Georg: *Wahrheit und Methode. Ergänzungen, Register*, Tübingen: Mohr 1993, p. 8, 505.

403 Fulda, Hans Friedrich: "Unzulängliche Bemerkungen zur Dialektik," In: *Seminar: Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1978, p. 38.

Determination and Negation in the Doctrine of Being

With his introduction of the speculative determinate negation, Hegel breaks with traditional metaphysics and logic. Many of the characteristics of this determinate negation relate to issues that we will deal with in the logic of essence (where the issue of contradiction stands in focus) and the logic of the concept (where I will treat the notion of a higher concept). But Hegel's transformation of the traditional framework of determination depends on his transformation of the way we understand basic ontological determinations such as being, reality and negation. In order to understand the meaning of the speculative determinate negation, we have to investigate how Hegel transforms the traditional framework. The determinate negation comes in at exactly the point where this framework collapses. We can expect two things from the following treatment: Firstly, to get a grip on exactly what the speculative determinate negation is intended to do at the point of collapse, and secondly, to get a general idea of how Hegel attempts an immanent critique of the traditional framework of determination based on methodical insights and ideas developed in German idealism.

As we already know, Hegel uses the determinate negation in different senses. In the following we will encounter the second time Hegel refers to this term in *WdL*. Here Hegel uses the term in a different way than in the introduction of *WdL*. He speaks of "determinate negations such as coldness and darkness," and the point he is making is that such determinations are not the absence of their opposite, but rather something in themselves. What is troubling is that while the speculative determinate negation puts the emphasis on the inclusion of opposite determinations into a new determination, the determinate negations Hegel speaks of the second time in *WdL* puts the emphasis on exclusion. I take this to be indicative of the nature of Hegel's dialectical-speculative framework of determination. Exclusion and inclusion are themselves determinations that are involved in a greater process of the development of a holistic logic, and cannot be taken as completely adequate when it comes to describing the fully developed structure of this logic. This has important consequences for how the different senses of the determinate negation may be integrated into the new framework of determination that Hegel proposes.

In general, this new framework is a framework of reason as opposed to the traditional framework, which is a framework of the understanding. Of course,

reason for Hegel includes both dialectics and speculation, and he does not seek to simply replace the traditional framework, but rather to integrate it. Hegel in fact lets the traditional framework arise *within* the logic. In the beginning of his logic Hegel makes use of and explores the notion of the absolute as it was developed in German idealism. He does this, however, in the context of *being* as that which lies beyond all distinctions, indifferently. From the instability of this absolute a stable being arises, i.e. *Dasein*. This is where the traditional framework arises. Gradually Hegel overcomes it from within by making the stable determinations fluid. Making determinations flow is the dialectical aspect of his new framework of determination, a process that is accompanied by the speculative, which grasps oppositions as one, ensuring that there is also a unity to the process. In the following I will develop this picture in detail.

There is, however, one important problem that will become more and more acute. All speculative unities seem to dissolve because they contain a contradiction. Unity is opposed to non-unity and therefore speculative unities, by unifying opposites, establishes new opposition. The question is whether the principle of speculation is possible to fulfill at all, i.e. whether there will be any final speculative resolution of all opposition. With the determination of the true infinite, Hegel claims to have reached a determination that is the unity of unity and separation, and therefore seems to fulfill the principle of speculation once and for all. As I will argue, this is not the case, which leaves the question of final resolution open.

This problem is perhaps one of the most challenging when it comes to giving a full account of the new framework of determination that Hegel proposes. It is deeply connected to the meaning of contradiction and the logic of the speculative concept, and I will attempt to give a few words on the issue here (we will return to it again later). What I will do, however, is to uncover the way in which contradiction appears, disappears and re-appears in different guises throughout the logic of being. This will give actual examples of what is meant by contradiction, how it dissolves, and how this leads to a speculative determinate negation.

Finally in this chapter, I will comment on the principle of *omnis determinatio est negatio*. This principle is often taken as one of the primary features of Hegel's thinking. I will argue that this is at most half of the story. The principle is itself dialectically unstable and cannot be said to be fully adequate when it comes to the speculative depths of Hegel's thinking. My argument will depend on the points I develop in my treatment of the logic of being and is therefore placed at the end of the chapter.

The analysis of the terms determination and negation in *WdL* brings with it a specific interpretative problem. In the first edition of *WdL*, which

was published in 1816, the terms *negation* and *determinateness* are treated explicitly on their own, i.e. as determinations belonging to the more detailed level of the exposition. The 1832-edition – published shortly after Hegel's death in 1831 – contained a revision and expansion of the doctrine of being, and in it negation as a separate term only appears in a comment to the determination of *quality*, where Hegel discusses the relationship between *reality* and *negation*. In both editions, however, determinateness is the title for the whole discussion of the determinations starting with *being*, passing through *Dasein* and ending with (qualitative) *infinity*. What is the reason for this apparent inconsistency between the two editions? Why has negation disappeared as an explicit determination? Most likely because negation plays such an important overarching role throughout Hegel's logic. It is negation that keeps the dialectical movement going, and, furthermore, different forms of negation constitute two (or three) of the main stages of the dialectical method (see 9.4.2). This suggests that negation has two separate meanings for Hegel, one in relation to determination in the logic of being (the inherited metaphysical meaning of negation in relation to the determination of reality), and the other in relation to method.⁴⁰⁴ The primary meaning for Hegel is, I think, the methodical one – at least this is the superordinate concept he is trying to explicate throughout his logic. As Hegel becomes more confident about his own doctrine of pure thinking in his logic, the traditional metaphysical meaning of negation becomes relegated to the comment section, mainly in order to show the continuity with tradition and the lack inherent in it.

7.1 The Beginning of the Logic

Hegel's logic seeks to begin with the ultimate beginning, that which is prior to time and anything that is definite in one way or another. It seeks the most original ground of determination, a substrate that is open to distinction but is itself beyond any distinction. Therefore it does not begin with a pre-defined structure of exclusion-relations between determinations and their negations, which

404 This view is expressed by Friedrich Hogemann and Walter Jaeschke in their introduction to the 1832-edition of *WdL*: "Hegel muß zu der Überzeugung gekommen sein, daß sie [die Negation] unter den elementaren Kategorien des Daseinskapitels fehl am Platze ist, vielmehr in die Darlegungen zur Methode gehört. Den Versuch, die Negation der Negation seinslogisch zu denken, hat er wohl deshalb aufgegeben, weil er die Einheitlichkeit der dialektischen Methode und damit der Wissenschaft selbst erschüttert hätte." GW 21:XXV. My interpretation in the following will be a closer examination of this standpoint.

is to say that it does not begin with the presupposition of the paradigm of *omnis determinatio est negatio*. However, no stable substrate beyond and prior to all distinctions is found. But the failure of finding such a substrate is a failure with a definite meaning: It shows forth a conceptual movement that despite the failure, or rather because of the failure, gives rise to a strong framework of determination. We are taught a lesson about the notion that all determination fundamentally has to begin with and relate to some immediate affirmative reality. This view, i.e. that negation is secondary to reality (also called the asymmetricalist view), had been the predominant one in all metaphysics up until but also including Kant (see 10.3.2). Hegel shows what happens if we proceed in full accordance with this notion on the level of pure thinking. He takes this notion to its extreme, and this becomes the starting point of its downfall. Through this he intends to point out that the relation of immediacy and mediation is abstract. Immediacy and mediation co-create each other.

To say that Hegel is a “great foe of immediacy”⁴⁰⁵ can therefore be misleading. Hegel indeed thinks it is right to begin with what is immediate, or, in his logic, with immediacy itself. This, however, might be just that which makes him a “great foe.” Dialectics comes as a nemesis to the hubris of positing something given as the ultimate source of reality. The claim that immediacy provides the ultimate source of reality is not rejected outright. It dissolves as it is thought through to its end, but is nevertheless included within a greater framework. This is Hegel’s way of immanent critique.

The idea of immediate knowledge, as an epistemological position, has been immanently criticised in *PhG*, Hegel claims, and this leads up to the standpoint of the logic.⁴⁰⁶ The point of beginning for the logic is therefore mediated by the absolute knowledge established in *PhG*, but is at the same time the full retreat of knowledge into pure thinking, where the whole relation of knowledge disappears, as *all* relation disappears. What is left is “einfache Unmittelbarkeit.” As Hegel notes, expressions such as “immediacy” are expressions of reflection. In reflection there is still a distinction, a relationship of exclusion between the immediate and the mediated. But reflection does not say more than that the one is not the other.⁴⁰⁷ When determining something as *immediate*, it is determined by referring to that which it is not. The immediate is the not-mediated, and in this way mediated, seemingly making *mediation* into the more fundamental determination. But mediation is also

405 Sellars, Wilfrid: *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill 1969, § 1, p. 14.

406 TWA 5:67=GW 21:54.

407 TWA 5:68=GW 21:55 f.

only a mediation of something, which makes this determination just as much conditioned by its opposite.

Both determinations are therefore interrelated and neither is adequate for capturing the purity of the intended immediacy. The purity of immediacy is better captured by the pre-reflexive term “being” (*Sein*). This is now Hegel’s version of what Schelling had sought in the complete abstraction of the subjective part of the intellectual intuition: A pure, *objective*, thought. For Schelling this was the ground of the philosophy of nature. For Hegel, pure thinking appears here as complete indeterminacy, as indeterminacy itself. Indeterminacy is what is common to everything insofar as we do not consider the particular nature of the thing in question. Is it then anything at all? Can we describe pure being without relying on some contrast, some determination of reflection? The presuppositionless beginning has to be *taken as* immediate (though it is clear – at least so far as we have the whole of the logic in view – that this is, and cannot be, anything other than an abstract, one-sided determination).⁴⁰⁸ We have to take the beginning as immediate in the sense of suspending the structure of determination where any determination is always (at least implicitly) a relation to something else. We have to try to think of that which would be without any determination, of that which is neither a specific determination, nor that which is excluded by positing a specific determination.⁴⁰⁹ This is in fact an attempt at suspending the traditional framework of determination. And out of this suspension a new framework arises.

7.2 The Original Movement of Pure Thinking

The triad being-nothing-becoming is perhaps the most thoroughly investigated part of Hegel’s logic. This is not without good reason. It represents the first movement of pure thinking and contains in it the structure of the rest of the logic. The interpretation I present here will therefore establish a guiding pattern for understanding the other parts of the logic that I will go into. As far as the determinate negation is concerned, I will make two important points regarding the being-nothing-becoming triad: The first is, as already indicated, that the logic (pure thinking) starts to move, as soon as one attempts to formulate an “absolute” framework of determination, i.e. one that is beyond all oppositions. As we try to reach it, it is lost, but this loss is not unproductive. The second point is that nothing (nothingness) is determinate since it is

408 TWA 5:71=GW 21:58, TWA 68 f.=GW 21:56.

409 TWA 5:72=GW 21:59 f.

distinguished from being. This is perhaps one of the most fundamental points that Hegel makes in the logic. On the level of pure thinking any distinction (such as a negation) imply a determination.

7.2.1 *Determinacy as Indeterminacy: Being*

The first determination of *being* is that it is pure and “without further determination.”⁴¹⁰ This purity is, however, itself an indeterminate form of immediacy. So it could aptly be characterized as having indeterminacy as its determinateness. It is also because of this that nothing particular can be located in it, and why it can be seen to exhibit essentially the same characteristics as nothing. It is the attempt at fulfilling the determination of indeterminacy that makes the being “move,” i.e. makes the initial determination progress further. I can take any concrete beings, anything I have before me, and try to find their ultimate common denominator. In the end we could perhaps find emptiness, darkness, or pure space, or similar determinations, or – as is Hegel’s suggestion – pure intuition or pure thinking.⁴¹¹ If I could state anything positive about what this is, then I would at the same time have to differentiate it from what it is not, and since this gives a definite character to both that which it is and that which it is not, it would not be the realization of thinking pure being.

As soon as anything specific is singled out, this gives a minimal positive character or reality to that which is excluded. Pure being is supposed to be that which is indifferent to that which is excluded, or what is other to it.⁴¹² What is required is a suspension of this framework. When an attempt is made at suspending it and to think pure being within another kind of framework, the result is that nothing can be posited. Definite distinctions are not allowed; pure being is that which could be anything at all, but is not anything at all. In a process of abstraction, the identification of species depend on identification also of that which is common to them, the genus, which again may be part of a higher genus as a species. If I identify the property of the highest genus, I can always make this into a species through distinguishing it from that which has the property and that which does not. That which has the property is one species and that which does not is another. Common to both, however, would be the substrate of reflection, the subject, which is determined in one way or the other. As far as the substrate is *being*, it is supposed to be free of any affirmation or negation, which is to say that the act of affirming and negating must be suspended. This means that I actually cannot even speak of a substrate

⁴¹⁰ TWA 5:82=GW 21:68.

⁴¹¹ TWA 5:82=GW 21:69.

⁴¹² GW 11:50 f.

insofar as that substrate can be distinguished from that which is not a substrate. It seems to be the case that to say what pure being is would mean to offer something, something different than any particular being, while it is in fact impossible to offer anything. It could be neither this nor that, which is to say that the result is the same as nothing. The realization of the reasons for this, which is an insight into the framework of determination that lies beyond the framework where any determination is also an exclusion of something, leads to the conclusion that pure being is nothing. This is the realization that the framework of determination that one seeks cannot be found.

As I have presented it, this realization can be seen to rely on a process of abstraction and reflection that might not seem obvious from Hegel's presentations of the dialectic of the determination of pure being. The presentation of the dialectics relies on the use of the determinations of reflection – so much is clear – but even the identification of the “unreachable” nature of pure being with nothing is an act of reflection:

Aber eben diese *Unbestimmtheit* ist das, was seine Bestimmtheit ausmacht, denn die Unbestimmtheit ist der Bestimmtheit entgegengesetzt, sie ist somit als Entgegengesetztes selbst das bestimmte oder Negative, und zwar die reine Negativität. Diese Unbestimmtheit oder Negativität, welche das Sein an ihm selbst hat, ist es, was die Reflexion ausspricht, indem sie es dem Nichts gleichsetzt. – Oder kann man sich ausdrücken: Weil das Sein das Bestimmungslose ist, ist es nicht die Bestimmung, welche es ist, also nicht Sein, sondern nichts.⁴¹³

The nothing that arises through the attempt at arriving at pure something through abstraction is, exactly because of this process of abstraction that is also a process of negation, already “afflicted” by a paradigm of determination through negation. The purity of being comes about through the negation inherent in abstraction, and carries over into it; its purity consists of the difference between it and any object that can still undergo further abstraction.⁴¹⁴

7.2.2 *Indeterminacy as Determinacy: Nothing*

The resolve to investigate the result of thinking being in its purity leads to having to take pure nothing into consideration in the way just shown. In Hegel's

⁴¹³ GW 11:51.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. V 11:34: “Dieses Sein, als das rein abstrakte genommen, ist aber selbst ein durch Abstraktion gesetztes und negatives; als ein solches hat es die Negation und Bestimmtheit an ihm, d. h. den Unterschied.”

exposition, many of the same determinations as we saw in relation to pure being show up, but it is still possible to find some differences when paying attention to the details. While being is “ohne alle weitere Bestimmung” nothing is “Bestimmungslosigkeit”; while being is “Leere” nothing is “Vollkommene Leerheit.” Both of these indicate that nothing is a more radical form of nothingness than pure being is. Furthermore, being is “sich selbst gleich,” while nothing is “einfache Gleichheit mit sich selbst.” Admittedly, these are quite similar descriptions, but while being is “nicht ungleich gegen Anderes, hat keine Verschiedenheit innerhalb seiner noch nach außen,” nothing is simply “Ununterscheidenheit in ihm selbst.” Pure being is both in everything and has everything in it; this could be seen to count as a difference with nothing, since nothing neither has anything in it, nor is in anything. However, since the realization of “having everything in it” and “being in everything” is pure indifference and therefore is the same as nothing, the difference is transient, ending up with pure thinking and intuition, which both have in common. Further, there is an important difference between being and nothing that does not seem to be transient. This becomes apparent by comparing the following sentences:

A: (which is said about *pure being*):

“Durch irgendeine Bestimmung oder Inhalt, der in ihm unterschieden, oder wodurch es als unterschieden von einem anderen gesetzt würde, würde es nicht in seiner Reinheit festgehalten.”⁴¹⁵

B: (which is said about *nothing*):

“Insofern Anschauen hier erwähnt werden kann, so gilt es als ein Unterschied, ob etwas oder *nichts* angeschaut oder gedacht wird.”⁴¹⁶

The point of A is that in order to think pure being, the framework of determination that allows for making clear distinctions must be suspended. The suspension of this framework, i.e. fixating being in its purity, is, however (as made clear by sentence B), something that itself would count as a ground for making a distinction – fixating pure being, either as thinking or intuiting nothing, is different from not doing it, and so there is a definite difference. In this way, the realization of a suspension of the framework of determination and negation, which is called for through the attempt at making a pure beginning, i.e. of thinking pure being, implies the reappearance of this framework, although this is made apparent only through the dialectic of nothing. To state the point more concisely: Thinking pure being implies thinking a determination that is

⁴¹⁵ TWA 5:82=GW 21:69.

⁴¹⁶ TWA 5:83=GW 21:70.

without distinction, effectively aiming at a framework of determination where something can be without being distinct from anything else; this results in the determination of pure nothing, the thinking of which implies the return of the framework based on distinction, *since the intended pure framework is distinct from the non-pure framework*. It is because of this that nothing is also being. Indeed, the point is just as simple as it is elusive: Nothing is distinct from being, therefore itself has a definiteness, has being.

However, pure being and nothing seem to have a further difference. Pure being is “Unbestimmte unmittelbarkeit” while nothing is mediated by the dialectic of being. Still, the thought of them is realized only by empty thinking or intuition, which is just as much something definite, in that it is different from non-empty thinking/intuition.⁴¹⁷ The slight shift in the description between the determinations of being and nothing is insignificant, since the analysis of the difference reveals the transition of the one into the other. The superficiality of the difference in descriptions of pure being and nothing now forms the ground of the transition to becoming, the determinate negation as a unity of an opposition.

What then about the contradiction (or self-contradiction) that is supposed to be involved in the transition? For there to be a contradiction, there needs to be an actual opposition between the determinations, something that seems to be exactly what the actual dialectics of the determinations is speaking against. As is clear from my above exposition, I often find expressions such as the *intention* or the *attempt* of realizing a certain conception of a determination to be most appropriate. And, as we have seen, the attempt always fails in that it realizes something else, or something more than that which was intended. This, I believe, gives us an important clue when it comes to understanding the nature of contradiction as involved in the dialectical method. In the beginning there is a certain law or intended framework of determination present, which, when followed through consistently, leads to the realization of something that was *not* intended – indeed, of that which the law said was to be avoided. Apparently then, contradiction in Hegel has to do with the relationship between that which is laid down by a law, and how the actual practice based on this law necessarily must break the law.⁴¹⁸ When being is thought through to

⁴¹⁷ Kant speaks of negation as the perception of an empty time (B 182). What Hegel is speaking of as empty intuition corresponds to this notion, as far as it is lifted up to the pure thought of this empty time.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Lypp, Bernhard: “Über die Wurzeln dialektischer Begriffsbildung in Hegels Kritik an Kants Ethik”, in: *Seminar: Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1978, p. 295–315.

its end it becomes nothing, and therefore contradicts itself. The same happens with nothing. The point of transition to speculation is the realization that being and nothing are the same. Both are the same determinate nothingness, each beginning with an emphasis on either determinateness or nothingness. Rather than saying that they are separate determinations it is closer to the truth to say that they are separate sections of the same movement. *In truth*, however, the dialectical movement is becoming.

7.2.3 *Unifying the Contradictory: Becoming*

Another contradiction is identifiable: Being and nothing are both the same as well as absolutely different.⁴¹⁹ This is, however, only a contradiction insofar as the speculative determination of becoming is left out of the consideration. When expressing speculative truths in sentences that exclude each other, the exposition becomes contradictory since their *connection* is de-emphasized. The connection is made by considering each one-sided sentence as expressions of a single movement.⁴²⁰ The contradiction between the two sentences is, however, different from the contradiction of each of the determinations of being and nothing. Being and nothing are contradictory since each turn into the other, but they can be considered to be contradictions only so long as we suppose that being and nothing actually are, or at least should be, different.

The contradiction of the determinations and the sentences that state something contradictory about them are, however, related. The expression that being and nothing are the same comes from the recognition that the one determination changes into the other. It is a bit harder to recognize how they are absolutely different. The point of absolute difference between being and nothing can be understood in that while pure being is supposed to be both equal and indifferent to everything, nothing is only equal to itself, i.e. different from everything. Of course, taken as final and definite, both of these descriptions are insufficient, as the further movement shows, for instance through the realization that complete self-equality and indifference turns out to be nothing. With becoming, the particular content of being and nothing (their passing difference) is negated, while the emphasis is put on their unity. In his 1831-lectures on the logic, Hegel is explicit with regards to what the contradiction consists of:

Sein und Nichts sind unterschieden und gegeneinander festgehalten im Verstand; doch da ist die Frage, welche Bestimmung kommt dem einen

⁴¹⁹ TWA 5:83=GW 21:70.

⁴²⁰ TWA 5:84=GW 21:70 f.

zu, die nicht auch dem anderen zukäme, solchen bestimmten Unterschied anzugeben, vermag man nicht; wenn wir fordern, einen bestimmten Unterschied anzugeben ist das [eine] widersprechende Forderung; denn ein Bestimmtes, d. h. ein Besonderes, soll angegeben werden, aber bei solchem Bestimmten sind wir noch nicht, sondern beim reinen Sein, beim in sich Bestimmungslosen. Der Unterschied ist unsagbar, oder er ist bloße Meinung, man kann nicht aussprechen, nicht etwas Bestimmtes sagen, das in einem wäre und nicht im anderen. Das Unaussprechliche ist bloß Subjektives; was etwas Substantielles in sich ist, das kann ich sagen.⁴²¹

The demand of stating the difference between being and nothing is contradictory because this implies stating something determinate, and both are supposed to be the purely indeterminate. For the understanding, however, being and nothing are definitely opposed, which is also a source of contradiction as far as they turn out to be the same. Hegel also gives a clue in the same lecture as to how the transition to the unity of being and nothing in becoming is to be understood:

Sein und Nichts sind abstrakt entgegengesetzt, doch eben in dieser Abstraktion ist die Identität beider gesetzt, und fixieren wir [dies], so haben wir das Werden; sie sind das auf gleiche Weise sich Beziehende, das Leere.⁴²²

That being and nothing are “abstractly opposed” means that no concrete difference can be pointed out. In contrast, something concretely opposed has some specific determinations that differentiate them. The abstractly opposed is only opposed through the insistence on their difference; the one is not the other. But because of this, the abstractly different is not different but identical – they both are that which the other is not “Wenn ich sage: ‘Sein und Nichts sind verschieden’, so spreche ich von ihnen dasselbe aus, nämlich ‘*verschieden*’, und so sage ich von ihnen das Nämliche aus, mithin die Einheit von beiden.”⁴²³ In the case of being and nothing the identity is furthermore that both being and nothing are supposed to be indeterminate, empty, but turn out to have the indeterminacy as determinacy, which is a contradiction for the understanding.

421 V 10:100. Cf. also GW 11:55: “Denn hätten Sein und Nichts irgendeine Bestimmtheit, wodurch sie sich unterschieden, so wären sie, wie vorhin erinnert worden, bestimmtes Sein und bestimmtes Nichts, nicht das reine Sein und das reine Nichts, wie sie es hier noch sind.”

422 V 10:100.

423 V 11:79.

However, if the sameness of being and nothing is fixated, then we have becoming. This might seem surprising, since fixation is commonly referred to as belonging to understanding and not speculation, which corresponds to the moment of becoming. This suggests that the understanding can also play a positive role in the transition from the dialectical confusion (negative reason) into the positive. When the understanding works negatively, it fixates the opposition of being and nothing, and accepts that the self-contradictory core of both of them (determinacy as indeterminacy) can have an affirmative content; the abstract negation that for the opposition-fixating understanding follows from the self-contradictory would be the indeterminacy that results from having to reject both sides of an opposition, which at least implicitly also rejects the unity of both in a new affirmative sense. This interpretation opens up for the interpretation of the determinate negation as the fixation of the *identity* of opposed determinations as opposed to the fixation of their *difference*, which can also be presented as the acceptance of positive reason over against an understanding that rejects any identity within opposed determinations. Still, as Hegel remarks, the transition is to be understood without further reflective determinations – it is an immediate transition that comes through grasping the abstractness of the difference between being and nothing.⁴²⁴

In one passage Hegel adds the following on the nature of the contradiction that is involved when claiming that being and nothing are one

Einheit von Sein und Nichts, so habe ich beide Bestimmungen in mein Bewußtsein gebracht, wo sie sich entgegengesetzt sind, ich spreche sie aus in ihrem vollkommenen Widerspruch; daß ich mir das ins Bewußtsein bringe, das ist das Widerstrebende. Man gibt ganz wohl zu, daß das [der] allerärgste Widerspruch sei; der Widerspruch Zerstört sich, das sagen wir auch, Werden ist diese Unruhe, das Zerstören, denn das Zerstören ist selbst auch [eine] Seite des Werdens.⁴²⁵

This suggests that the contradiction is not simply resolved once and for all in the speculative moment, since it is this destructive side of becoming that brings the movement to progress further.

424 TWA 5:109=GW 21:90. This means that the transition should not involve a reflection on the fact that there is an opposition between the separateness of being and nothing and their speculative unity.

425 V 10:99.

7.2.4 *The Dissolution of the Speculative Unity: The Transition to Dasein*

A stage of the movement of pure thinking that is often overlooked is the dissolution of the speculative moment and the emergence of a new determination that is a continuation of the preceding determinations, somehow containing them, but in a certain sense as completely resolved or collapsed. In the unity of being and nothing their difference is still at least intended; not so with the determination that now presents itself, *Dasein*, which is neither their unity, their intended difference, nor their posited difference or opposition. What is it then? In order to answer this, we must first look at how it arises. Becoming consists of the two moments of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, which contains the disappearance of being and nothing, beginning from opposite ends as it were. As a movement, becoming is a unity of being and nothing, but the movement is also dependent on the distinction between being and nothing, a distinction which is now only intended – if the movement is to last, the distinction has to be more than this, which it cannot be, if the unity is to be sustained. In this way, becoming is contradictory: “Es widerspricht sich also in sich selbst, weil es solches in sich vereint, das sich entgegengesetzt ist; eine solche Vereinigung aber zerstört sich.”⁴²⁶

The reason why this stage of the movement is often overlooked is perhaps because it is difficult to fit into a schematic representation of the dialectical movement. First we learn that the self-contradictory can be resolved. Then it seems that the dissolution was not really a dissolution, that it contains a contradiction in itself, that the unification of opposition was not real after all, that it is in fact *destroyed*, implying that the contradictory is not dissolved into something new but into the *nihil negativum*. The previous resolution of being and nothing, of the *nihil negativum* and all other notions of nothing, are, however, still in place, in the sense that there is no return, or no way back. The disappearance of the distinction of being and nothing is the dissolution of becoming into calmness, a calmness that takes with it the essence of that which has gone before, and becomes a new immediacy, the *one-sided* unity of being and nothing, which is *Dasein*. The other side of the unity that is *Dasein* would be the unity of being and nothing in becoming, which is not an immediate unity, since it depends on the intended distinction of being and nothing.

As it is well-known, Hegel uses the expression *Aufhebung* to signify a very important aspect of his philosophy, and there are some clear overlapping meanings of it and the determinate negation. One meaning of it is cancellation, the other is of preservation. It does not cancel in the sense of turning something into nothing, but through bringing it further (like the speculative

426 TWA 5:113=GW 21:93 f.

determinate negation). It is also something mediated, a result, and has the determination of that from which it arises still in it, namely all the characteristics that make it overlap with the speculative determinate negation. As far as I can see, the only difference between them is that the determinate negation is also used for emphasizing that there is a continuing aspect of negation that stands in the foreground. As Hegel says: “Etwas ist nur insofern aufgehoben, als es in die Einheit mit seinem Entgegengesetzten getreten ist”⁴²⁷ This is not the case with determinate negations such as darkness. The *aufhebung* of darkness would imply a relation to its opposite, light (maybe in a way that makes color appear). Since Hegel also introduces the term *Aufhebung* as the *Aufhebung* of becoming, the point seems to be that it is becoming that now enters into a unity with *its* opposite, which would be the difference of being and nothing. The *Aufhebung* makes becoming *itself* into a moment, alongside being and nothing. As becoming is a determinate negation, a unity of being and nothing containing them as moments, *Dasein* is the *Aufhebung* of becoming, which now contains all three moments. The way Hegel presents the term *Aufhebung* in the logic is therefore primarily about the stage of the movement of pure thinking where the speculative unity of opposites itself dissolves.

7.2.5 *Reflection on the Speculative Determinate Negation*

Let us now look at the characteristics of the determinate negation in the context of the program of *WdL* and see if we can already shed light on some of them (see 6.3). At this point we can conclude that the sense of the self-contradictory as an abstract negation that resolves into null or all negation (point 2ai & 2aii) is the thought that contradictions cannot “exist,” cannot be thought and therefore are nothing.⁴²⁸ This corresponds roughly to Kant’s *nihil negativum*, which is the nothingness of the object of a concept that is contradictory.⁴²⁹ Kant mentions three other forms of nothingness, *ens rationis*, *nihil privativum* and *ens imaginarium*. The correspondence to Hegel’s understanding of nothingness in *WdL* is only very rough since Kant often makes use of the opposition of consciousness in his exposition. The *ens imaginarium* is a concept that does not have any corresponding intuition, such as the determination *noumena*.

427 TWA 114=GW 21:95 f.

428 V 10:52: “Jeder Begriff ist ein Konkretes und enthält unterschiedene Bestimmungen in sich und enthält so eine Antinomie. [...] ein Widerspruch kann aber nicht existieren, sagt die Kritik, sondern der Widerspruch fällt in unser Denken: Das ist dieser Grundsatz, daß das Widersprechende nicht sei, dann auch, daß nichts Widersprechendes gedacht werden könne, aber gerade das ist hier der Fall, wir denken Widersprechendes in Einem.”

429 B 347.

Such “imagined beings” are beings that are in principle possible, but not actually, since they are not empirical. This is not the nothing Hegel has in mind, since it relies on oppositions such as empirical and non-empirical, *noumena* and *phenomena*. Of course, in the end, nothing is also something determinate for Hegel, but it is dialectically unstable, and in fact has no clear-cut meaning (as it does in Kant’s different specifications of nothing).

One could also make the dialectical point that nothingness is in a minimal sense determinate and therefore not really nothing against Kant’s conceptions of the *nihil privativum* and *ens imaginarium*. The *nihil privativum* relies on stable sense of the opposition between reality as something and negation as nothing. However, negation and reality are fundamentally different determinations and “negation” works differently in a conceptual framework than reality does. The way it works differently gives it a substantial reality of its own. The *ens imaginarium* is the empty form of intuition and only contains the formal conditions for the appearance of an object; a Hegelian point would be that empty intuition also contains an “object” in the sense that one can make a distinction between intuiting something and intuiting nothing, while both are nonetheless intentional states.

Two senses of how the negative can be something positive can also be identified (point 1). The first is the notion that nothing is something, since there is a difference between thinking nothing and thinking something; the pure nothing that the thought of nothing is supposed to be about is a “nothing that fails,” it is determined as indeterminacy and has some basic self-subsistence of its own. The second notion is that of the moment of “positive reason” that arises from negative reason or the self-contradiction of a determination of the understanding. The contradictory is something negative as far as it does not lead to anything new but rather gets stuck in nothingness. This nothingness is positive insofar as its speculative content is realized.

As we have seen, the determinate negation is also a negation of the determinate thing, but at this point it seems meaningless to speak of a thing. The thing in question, however, is the nature of determination, or more specifically the nature of the indeterminate, the presuppositionless, the beyond-this-or-that. As it turns out, indeterminacy is also a determination, which brings the contradictory nature of pure determination, which is equal to indeterminacy, to full light. As far as it can be spoken of as a determinate thing in this way, I take the determinate negation of it to be a resolution of this contradiction, this determinate thing.

The further aspects of the determinate negation (3a-f) are easier to recognize. The first can be summarized in the following way – the determinate negation as becoming is:

- a. Something that results from being, but contains it as a part of *Enstehen* and *Vergehen*.
- b. As becoming, obviously a new concept.
- c. A negation with content, which is partially its moments, as well as the connection between them, i.e. the movement between them.
- d. A higher concept, in the sense that it contains something common to both being and nothing (their oneness), as well as richer, since it explicitly contains something that was only implicit in being and nothing, i.e. their movement, coming-to-be and ceasing to be, their difference.

Becoming as a determinate negation is also *one* side of an opposition (e) since the *unity* of being and nothing is emphasized, while their *difference* stands in the background as a surpassed stage, or is only something intended.⁴³⁰ The speculative is in this sense also something one-sided. It emphasizes unity over difference. The last characteristic of the determinate negation as the unity of opposites (f). This is evident from the first heading under *Werden*, “Einheit des Seins und Nichts,” although the opposition at this point is only something intended. Hegel notes that *unity* (more than *identity*) can be taken to mean something that results from subjective, external reflection, but this is not the case for being and nothing. The unity that subjective reflection finds, leaves the unified objects separate in reality, only pointing out their abstract commonalities. Speculative unity means inseparability, but such a unity is not reached affirmatively by subjective reflection.

Furthermore, the expression “unity of opposition” implicitly also contains its opposite. A speculative unity is a negation of *its* opposite, namely non-unity, or the separation of the unified elements. Similarly, the determinate negation as one side of a pair of opposites only implicitly containing the *unity* of the pairs. This unity becomes explicit once it becomes clear that both sides are determined completely in relation to the other. We will return to this point later in the context of the dialectic of something and other.

7.3 Dasein: The Traditional, Dialectical and Speculative Framework of Determination

With the collapse of becoming, *Dasein* arises.⁴³¹ The main parts of *Dasein* are finitude and infinity. The movement of *Dasein* is important in particular

⁴³⁰ TWA 5:95=GW 21:79.

⁴³¹ *Dasein* has no directly corresponding word in the English language. The best option, in my view, if one wants to use an English equivalent, would be to use the construction

because it contains Hegel's doctrine of determinateness in general, which includes a doctrine of negation. I will not give an account of all the details of this dialectical movement, but focus on its general aspects and some issues that require special attention, such as Hegel's treatment of the Spinozian principle *omnis determinatio est negatio*. Since the dialectics of *Dasein* also represent the first noticeable repetition of the movement of pure thought, it will also allow for a provisional statement of what the method is, or at least to give an account for the different stages that are repeated in the movement.

7.3.1 *The Traditional Framework Revisited*

In the context of *Dasein* Hegel goes deeply into the traditional paradigm of determination, which posits a fundamental difference between reality and negation, where reality is something affirmative, independently existing, and negation something insubstantial, only posited by subjective thinking. Conceived in this way reality as such contains only realities, a certain set of qualities. When one quality is taken away, another is immediately present. An example of reality conceived in this way is Kant's idea of the transcendental prototypen. It is evident that Hegel here draws directly on Kant and his introduction of the terms reality, negation and limit under the heading of quality. Hegel's distinct contribution is the dialectical connection of these terms. As we have seen, Hegel, inspired by Fichte, had begun this already in Jena.

Whereas pure being is *indeterminate* being, *Dasein* is *determinate* being. The determinateness of this being is its quality, which in *Dasein* comes in two forms, corresponding to the being-nothing distinction that it contains in it as *Aufgehoben*. Reality corresponds to being; negation corresponds to nothing. This accounts for the difference that is found in quality, namely that quality is an immediately present being that has an opposite, a negation, which is also a being. Both determinate beings can co-exist though they are negations of each other.

Here Hegel brings in the idea of God as *all reality*, as a perfection that contains no negation, or the complete reality within which all single realities are not opposed and do not contradict each other.⁴³² The single realities are combinable in the sense of being able to co-exist within the whole of reality. This is easily conceivable by considering qualities such as *red* and *sour*.

being-there as Geraets, Suchting and Harris do in their translation of *Enz.* (*The Encyclopedia Logic*, Indianapolis: Hackett 1991). However, *being-there* suggest spatial location, which is not what is meant at this point; *Dasein* also has this connotation, which Hegel also notes (TWA 5:115=GW 21:97), but is much broader, as it includes existence and life in general. Using the German word has the advantage of leaving the meaning of the word more open.

These qualities are different but still combinable in one and the same object. *Red* is a contrary opposite to *blue*, but both can exist *side-by-side*. Only *red* and *not red* are contradictory. *Blue* is also *not red*, but there is no such thing or quality as *not red* itself. “Not red” is either to be replaced by another quality or it is simply the denial of a quality, a denial happening within a subjective process of reason that has nothing whatsoever to with reality as such. Non-combinable or contradictory qualities such as “square-circle” are simply non-existent. Combinations of *real oppositions* could perhaps be allowed, having some neutral state as a result. This was, however, not considered within the traditional framework of determination before Kant, since there was no known way of conceiving opposite predicates as meeting in the same subject without this resulting in a contradiction.

The problem for Hegel is that if we conceive reality in a way where we remove negation from the “content” of reality, reality itself becomes – precisely because negation is given no affirmative significance – devoid of all determinateness. The idea is simple: If anything is posited, any affirmative reality, then *its negation is negated*. If A is posited, then not-A is excluded. If, when positing A, not-A is thereby *not* excluded, then A must be indeterminate, since not-A is just as possible.

The most straightforward way of conceiving determination is to think of two possibilities that can be posited where each one excludes the other as soon as it is posited or becomes actual. Determination means the positing of one possibility and the exclusion of the other. As long as none of them are posited, the state of affairs is indeterminate. If none are posited, this is also a form of determinateness, since it excludes the actual positing of one of them; indeterminacy excludes determination but is therefore also determinacy in a minimal sense. If we do not see negation as constitutive for determination, determination has to be something other than exclusion. How could determination be something other than exclusion? Could it be inclusion? That may very well be, but *inclusion* also always means *exclusion*; when something is included, it is excluded that it is not included. If we try to exclude *nothing* when we determine something, we end up having all content before us, i.e. not singling out anything but rather having to state everything. Since we are not allowed to say *this and not that* we end up losing sight of all determination, possibly faced with an infinite task of listing up all the content of the world. Determination on such an account is also a negation, since it excludes the framework of determination where determination is exclusion. Therefore, rather than opening up for a different framework of determination we end up confirming the framework we sought to deny.

7.3.2 *Dialectical Determination: Something and Other, Limit and Finitude*

As a simple self-relation, something [*Etwas*] is the first negation of the negation.⁴³³ Some confusion arises here, since negation of the negation can mean the simple return to itself, as when I say that it is essential for something to be what it is that it is not something else (not something else=negation of the negation). There is also a sense in which the negation of the negation is connected with the determinate negation within the method. The negation of the negation within the method is the negation of the self-contradictory (i.e. negative), which then gives a new determination. The negation of the negation is the moment before the self-contradictory is resolved into a new determination, or the actual moment of resolution itself. There is then obviously an important distinction between the negation of the negation as related to the actual determination of logical categories, where the focus is on the essentiality of the exclusion, and the dialectical method, where the focus is on how a negation of the negative or self-contradictory provides a ground for the transition to the speculative. I will not pursue this further here. I will return to it in the interpretation of the dialectical method as it appears in the doctrine of the concept.

That an other to a something is also a something is easy to grasp as far as it is pointed out that the other is just as much a being-there, another *Dasein*. It is also easy to grasp that something is also other: "Wenn wir ein Dasein A nennen, das andere aber B, so ist zunächst B als das Andere bestimmt. Aber A ist ebenso sehr das Andere des B. Beide sind auf diese Weise *Andere*."⁴³⁴ Both somethings are others, and we can add: Both are somethings. So everything seems to be the same, or rather, there is only one thing. We can try to differentiate between different things by introducing different letters or by calling the one something *this* and the other *that*. But this would presuppose that there is difference. The way in which something and other are the same (both are a something and another) does not do justice to the notion that the other as an isolated determination, or where the other has some nature that is not reducible to the relationship between different instances of "being-theres," i.e. "das in sich schlechthin Ungleiche."⁴³⁵ This is a determination that "escapes" as soon as it is conceived, it is the other that is always another other, since the other that is conceived is always a something. Still, we identify this escaping, this pure other, this other other. We get hold of its nature and can say what it is, how it is, and how it is not, and therefore it is again a something.

433 TWA 5:124=GW 21:113.

434 TWA 5:125=GW 21:105.

435 TWA 5:127=GW 21:106.

By considering how something and other essentially relate to each other we see the *moments* of something arise: *Ansichsein* and *Sein-für-Anderes*. Something is *Ansichsein* as far as it excludes the other and this exclusion is recognized as inherent in what it is. Something is *Sein-für-Anderes* as far as its relationship to its other, or to otherness in general, is such that it includes it; something is also the other of another something. These two moments of something both belong to it; *Sein-für-Anderes* depends on some *Ansichsein*, since if there were no *Ansichsein*, there would be nothing to relate, nothing that includes the other, but a something that simply dissolves, an absolute relative something. Furthermore, *Ansichsein* also carries the meaning of being an undeveloped determination, i.e. a determination that puts the focus on something as that which “aus dem Sein-für-Anderes heraus in sich zurückgekehrt ist.”⁴³⁶

Something has in itself, in its *Ansichsein*, to be determined as *Sein-für-Anderes*; its meaning can be determined only through relating it to something else, an other. This *movement*, this having in itself to go beyond itself and that the going beyond itself is a realization of what the determination has in itself to become, is one of the most basic notions of dialectical determination or determination according to the concept in Hegel's logic.⁴³⁷ The German word in use here is *Bestimmung*, which carries a double meaning. It means the same as the Latin *determinatio*, the abstract or concrete predicate that says what something is, but it also means *fate* or that which something is determined to become. However, Hegel reserves the term *Bestimmung*, or determination, for the determination of something as far as it has in itself to go beyond itself and relate essentially to otherness. Determinateness (*Bestimmtheit*) is, in contrast to determination (*Bestimmung*) the realized, or posited, determination. Something that has determinateness has undergone what it had in itself, or was determined, to become. Determination is the uncovering of the essential nature of something, where the specification of something is at once the fulfillment of its fate, and this fate is not something external to that which is determined – “Die Bestimmung enthält dies, daß, was Etwas *an sich* ist, auch *an ihm* sei.”⁴³⁸ In his account of determinateness Hegel therefore relies equally on the sense of determination as both fate and predication. However, these are combined in a way that both removes the abstractness of predication as well as the externality of fate. Determination acquires the meaning of that which something has in itself to become, while determinateness is the state of realization of the determination.

436 TWA 5:129=GW 21:108.

437 TWA 5:131=GW 21:110.

438 TWA 5:132=GW 21:111.

Between determination and determinateness lies the constitution (*Beschaffenheit*) of the thing, as that which belongs to the thing but not properly to that which it has in itself to become; it is the “external existence” of something, that which it happens to be as far as it is open to the influence of and subjected to otherness. If we allow ourselves to speak of fate or destiny in this context, we can say that the constitution of something is the state of an unrealized destiny, a state which does not correspond to that which it is destined to become, but still a state which makes out what the thing is as a something, as being entangled in a mixture of external circumstances. In this way something is fully divided in itself, into that which it is and that which it is to become, while that which something happens to be can be completely indifferent to that which it has in itself to become.

The constitution of the thing is, furthermore, its transient and changing aspect. It is that which is both open to changing external circumstances as well as inwardly open to that which something has in itself to become. However, since, as we have seen, something is that which has in itself to become other the inward openness is at the same time openness toward otherness: “Insofern das, was Etwas *an sich* ist, auch *an ihm* ist, ist es mit Sein-für-Anderes behaftet; die Bestimmung ist damit als solche offen dem Verhältnis zu anderem.”⁴³⁹ The other, as a something, shares the determination of something, and therefore both pass into each other. However, the whole of this notion depends on the separation of something and other. There cannot be a transition unless there is something to change both from and into. When fully grasped, this sense of determination, where something passes over into and conjoins with an other, is the same as *limit* (*Grenze*).

At first it may seem that limit does not at all mean “conjoining with otherness” but rather is the static intersection between something and other. Hegel is, however, intent on showing how this cannot be the case, that although limit really is a static intersection, when taken purely logically, i.e. according to its concept and in its development, it becomes apparent how it is a determination exhibiting “Verwicklung und Widerspruch.”⁴⁴⁰ Limit is the non-being not only of the other but also of something. Furthermore, limit is the non-being of the other as another something and the other of this something; in this way limit is the non-being of both something and other. At the same time, a limit is essential to the quality of something, although the limit in itself is a beyond of the something. Limit, as being the exact in-between of something and other, is equally that through which something is and is not.

439 TWA 5:134=GW 21:112.

440 TWA 5:136=GW 21:113.

Something could not be what it is without the limit, and in this sense something is the limit, but the limit is itself not the something. Still, the quality of something is something more than the limit, although the limit is intrinsic to it; something will always have a limit, but there will be something in the something that remains the same if the limit changes. In this way the limit seems arbitrary. However, if we consider the matter more closely, we see that it is not. If we conceive something without a specific limit, we are left with everything or something in general – the something which is indistinguishable from the other. The limit is therefore fully essential to the something as such. Because of this the other is also fully essential for something; a limit is always a limit of something and other. To establish something, a limit must be drawn, and therefore, immediately an other is also established. By having a limit something is other. Therefore something is contradictory in its very nature – the limit, which is essential to it, makes it go beyond itself, into the other. This is the concept of *finitude*.

At this point Hegel introduces what could be viewed as a strong metaphysical thesis, namely that all finite things must pass away:

Das Endliche verändert sich nicht nur, wie Etwas überhaupt, sondern es *vergeht*, und es ist nicht bloß möglich, daß es vergeht, so daß es sein könnte, ohne zu vergehen. Sondern das Sein der endlichen Dinge als solches ist, den Keim des Vergehens als ihr Insichsein zu haben, die Stunde ihrer Geburt ist die Stunde ihres Todes.⁴⁴¹

This thesis can, however, be viewed as simply representing a fact about what has been going on within the realm of pure logical determination; all determinations have shown themselves to pass away. Even though certain logical categories, such as that of becoming, come closer to an infinite mode of determination, they also pass away. The thesis that everything finite must pass away will, of course, have consequences for the *Realphilosophie*, but this need not to concern us here. The main point is that the principle arises out of the self-determination of pure thinking and is therefore not a metaphysical principle of the same sort as, for instance, the identity of indiscernibles.

Hegel compares the thesis of the transitoriness of the finite to the metaphysics that treats the negation, otherness and limit, as something substantial, real and unchanging:

441 TWA 5:139 f.=GW 21:116.

Die Endlichkeit ist um dieser qualitativen Einfachheit der Negation, die zum abstrakten Gegensatz des Nichts und Vergehens gegen das Sein zurückgegangen ist, die hartnäckigste Kategorie des Verstandes; die Negation überhaupt, Beschaffenheit, Grenze vertragen sich mit ihrem Anderen, dem Dasein; auch das abstrakte Nichts wird für sich als Abstraktion aufgegeben; aber Endlichkeit ist die als *an sich fixierte* Negation und steht daher seinem Affirmativen schroff gegenüber. Das Endliche läßt sich so in Fluß wohl bringen, es ist selbst dies, zu seinem Ende bestimmt zu sein, aber nur zu seinem Ende; – es ist vielmehr das Verweigern, sich zu seinem Affirmativen, dem Unendlichen hin affirmativ bringen, mit ihm sich verbinden zu lassen; es ist also untrennbar von seinem Nichts gesetzt und alle Versöhnung mit seinem Anderen, dem Affirmativen, dadurch abgeschnitten. Die Bestimmung der endlichen Dinge ist nicht eine weitere als ihr *Ende*. Der Verstand verharrt in dieser Trauer der Endlichkeit, indem er das Nichtsein zur Bestimmung der Dinge, es zugleich *unvergänglich* und *absolut* macht. Ihre Vergänglichkeit könnte nur in ihrem Anderen, dem Affirmativen, vergehen; so trennte sich ihre Endlichkeit von ihnen ab; aber sie ist ihre unveränderliche, d. i. nicht in ihr Anderes, d. i. nicht in ihr Affirmatives übergehende Qualität; *so ist sie ewig*.⁴⁴²

As far as finitude is considered in relation to the infinite, it becomes clear how the determination of finitude is both an exclusion and inclusion of the infinite: “Das Endliche hat den Doppelsinn, erstens nur das Endliche gegen das Unendliche zu sein, das ihm gegenübersteht, und zweitens das Endliche und das ihm gegenüberstehende Unendliche *zugleich* zu sein.”⁴⁴³ Finitude is usually conceived as something that is *not* essentially related to infinity; the beyond of a finite reality is conceived of as a simple nothing. For Hegel there can be no such nothing. He has already shown that any abstract nothingness, the pure nothing, is equally an indeterminate something and, furthermore, becoming, something that passes away and leaves determinate being.⁴⁴⁴ Hegel also insists that he has shown that something, whether it is finite or infinite, is always essentially related to its other and that therefore everything passes away into its other. This truth is now taken to be universal in the sense that passing away itself is something that passes away:

442 TWA 5:140=GW 21:117 f.

443 TWA 5:163=GW 21:135.

444 Cf. TWA 5:141=GW 21:118: “Sollte aber das Endliche nicht im Affirmativen vergehen, sondern sein Ende als das *Nichts* gefaßt werden, so wären wir wieder bei jenem ersten, abstrakten Nichts, das selbst längst vergangen ist.”

[...] die Entwicklung des Endlichen zeigt, daß es an ihm als dieser Widerspruch in sich zusammenfällt, aber ihn dahin wirklich auflöst, nicht daß es nur vergänglich ist und vergeht, sondern daß das Vergehen, das Nichts, nicht das Letzte ist, sondern vergeht.⁴⁴⁵

The finite conceived in this way consists of the moments of limitation (*Schranke*) and the ought; limitation is a development of the concept of limit in that the limitation is a limit that is posited as essential.⁴⁴⁶ The limit of something was at first conceived as inessential. When the limit is conceived as essential, we pass over into finitude. Something cannot be finite without having a limit. The other moment of finitude – the moment opposite to limitation – is that of the ought, and is characterized by the coincidence of the being and non-being that were still separate in the determination of something: “Was sein soll, *ist* und *ist* zugleich *nicht*.”⁴⁴⁷

The root of the ought in this context is the specifically Hegelian idea of determination, in which something has in itself to go beyond itself. With the notion of the ought the emphasis lies on the fact that finitude only is by going beyond itself, while it at the same time must be limited in order to be, i.e. in order to not have passed over into its other. The finite must pass, but it cannot pass without losing itself. It ought to go beyond itself, but it cannot. This in itself already lies in the moment of limitation, or is a direct consequence of conceiving finitude as essentially limitation. Limitation posits that the finite is essentially other, while the moment of ought limits the realization of this, and posits the other only as a beyond, as an ought. This now becomes the real limitation of finitude, i.e. a limitation that gives the finite definiteness. The finite is something that ought to pass over into the beyond, but in fact remains as it is:

Als *sollen* ist somit Etwas *über seine Schranke erhaben*, umgekehrt hat es aber nur als *Sollen* seine *Schranke*. Beides ist untrennbar. Etwas hat insofern eine Schranke, als es in seiner Bestimmung die Negation hat, und die Bestimmung ist auch das Aufgehobensein der Schranke.⁴⁴⁸

Hegel has an idealist understanding of finitude. This means that he considers finite entities from the viewpoint of the whole. Any single existence “here”

445 TWA 5:142=GW 21:118.

446 TWA 5:142 f.=GW 21:119.

447 TWA 5:143=GW 21:121.

448 TWA 5:144=GW 21:120.

and “now” is ideal, or abstract. Still, this is not to say that real, finite things do not have subsistence. “Hard” entities, such as stones and metals, definitely do. From the viewpoint of the whole, however, we know that hard things also pass away, they can dissolve and so on. These are, however, mediated processes, changes that show up in time and reveal the deeper nature of finite existence. As far as the finite is considered in the mode of its “hardness,” a finite entity persists in relation to other entities. Other entities are nothing for it. As soon as the other involves itself in a finite existence, it is already changing.

For Hegel, it is only the spiritual that persists *as itself in its otherness* (similar to how a universal concept persists throughout particular instances). Finitude as an inherent and mutual relationship to otherness is gradually instantiated as the spiritual, or conceptual, is realized in and through external being. A sentient being, says Hegel, feels pain *because* its being enters into what it is not, into its negation.⁴⁴⁹ It is only with *thinking* that the principle or the concept of finitude as consisting of self-transcendence is realized. Anything that thinking posits as a beyond of itself does not contain anything else than this positing, i.e. it is only something *thought* and therefore not alien to thinking but rather fully known to it. It is only in thinking that the finite is overcome and fully united with the infinite. The finite human being, a finite knower, who is entangled in externality can never *actually* become infinite, at least not as a perceiving being. However, as a thinking being it becomes one with the infinite. This becoming one with thinking is the grasping of the realization of the concept, grasping the ideality of finite existence, and seeing how finitude as an idea always passes over into infinity.

The way in which this happens is at this point not too hard to understand, since it was to a certain extent already present in Hegel’s idea of dialectical determination and determinateness. The contradiction inherent in the finite is that it is both limitation and the ought. As limitation it is something that does not pass over into its other. As the ought it is the passing over into the other; it is both being and other-being. Limitation is opposite to this – it separates being and not-being and gives being to the finite and not-being to the beyond. Because of this contradiction, the finite dissolves, goes under, becomes other than what is or what it ought to be. But this going under and not being what it ought to be is simply the realization of what finitude has in itself. If it were to go under in its other it would leave this other, but the other has equally in itself to become *its* other, and so when both go under they both also realize themselves. There is no real other to the finite except for the limit that is posited for all finitude. Limitation, however, ought to have a real other, for only

449 TWA 5:146=GW 21:122.

through this is its limitation (the beyond of the limitation is the finite, and therefore the finite returns infinitely to itself). This is now a real, new, other, an other that is not the finite that has a beyond, but finitude that returns to itself by and exactly through being the other of itself. This is the other of the finite, the infinite.

7.3.3 *Speculative Determination: The True Infinite*

Infinity is at first determined as the negation of the finite, but this determination is one-sided, and the point for Hegel in this context is to show how the finite and infinite are not only reciprocally determined, but that they also take part in a process of self-dissolving, which gives rise to the true infinite. Everything depends on the differentiation between the infinite of the understanding and the infinite of reason. The infinite of reason is not opposed to the finite, but is rather the realized self-transcendence of the finite, which, as we have just seen, is found in the finite itself, or simply is the finite in its truth. The finite is that which goes beyond itself, and in the beyond the finite meets only another finite, which also goes beyond itself, and thereby the finite returns to itself. When we fully grasp this, we can also grasp how the finite is in fact unlimited, or infinite. It never exhibits any substantial, specific limit, but only posits a limit in order to transcend it, and through this to become what it is, uniting with its other, becoming infinite.

There is, however, a difference between this infinite, as the realized self-transcendence of the finite, and the infinite as the not yet realized finite. The infinite is something definite only when the finite is negated as such; the deeper determination of the finite is that it is that which has in itself to *become* the infinite.⁴⁵⁰ The finite and the infinite at first stand over against each other, each one a negation of the other, while, furthermore, the infinite is the affirmative negation of the negation, i.e. of the finite. As far as the infinite is thought of as “das Nicht-Endliche – ein Sein in der Bestimmtheit der Negation”⁴⁵¹ the infinite has a definite character and is the beyond, the infinite of the understanding, where the finite and infinite are “two worlds” separated from each other.

The infinite is in this way itself finite. It is a limit of the finite, a limit that the finite cannot pass over into, and therefore an infinite in the form of a being-there or *Dasein*. This form of the infinite is the bad infinite, the infinite that the understanding often retreats to in order to reach a final resolution of the

450 TWA 5:150=GW 21:125.

451 TWA 5:152=GW 21:126.

conflicts in which it gets entangled.⁴⁵² Hegel claims, however, that the understanding really finds itself in an *absolute contradiction* when it introduces the infinite: *The beyond of the bad infinite is simply another finite*. It is “bad” or finite because it is not at all the transcendence of the finite that it is supposed to be; it only bears the name of “infinite.” As a determinateness that is a negation it is simply finite. It is clear then that the infinite, the true infinite, cannot stand in an opposition to its negation (the finite) but somehow includes its negation as part of itself.

I believe Hegel is really struggling with this point, and that the speculative unity that is about to emerge here might be of another nature than the one we saw emerge as the unity of being and nothing. The unity of being and nothing itself contained a contradiction in the sense that it depended on the separateness of being and nothing in order to be the unity it was supposed to be; it was a unity only because it was the opposite of the separateness of being and nothing. It was because of this that it was claimed that becoming is a determinate negation both in the inclusive and exclusive sense. At this point – in the dialectics of the finite and the infinite – I believe Hegel is approaching a determinate negation, a unity, *that unites also with the exclusion that is implied in a unity*, i.e. a unity that is not separateness, or rather is *separate from separateness* and able to resolve this contradiction on a positive way. If this notion of unity is successfully brought about, what will arise is a unity that is immediately also one with its own opposition.

As far as I can tell, the way in which Hegel is trying to establish such a notion of unity is through the repetition of the dialectics of the finite *within* the dialectics of the infinite – the dialectics of the latter is not in any significant way different from the dialectics of the former. The finite and the infinite are defined as others of each other, and are in their nature not really opposite of each other, but each term can be replaced by the other,⁴⁵³ when it comes to stating their intrinsic nature. Still – since they are supposed to be dissimilar – they are contradictory. Both are the unity of itself and its other; both are determined to not be its other.⁴⁵⁴ It is this that presents itself as the infinite progress. Here the infinite is reached only by positing something beyond the finite,

452 Probable examples of what Hegel has in mind here is Kant's resolution of the conflicts of practical reason, and Fichte's doctrine of the infinite drive. More recent examples would perhaps be Gadamer's hermeneutics as well as Habermas' theory of truth as grounded in infinite discourse.

453 Cf. TWA 5:163=GW 21:135: “Es ist aber völlig gleichgültig, welches als Anfang genommen werde [...]”

454 TWA 5:155=GW 21:129 f.

which is a new finite, which again must be negated and left behind, only to produce a new finite, and so on. This is also an *unresolved* contradiction, a contradiction that is always reproduced as one tries to go beyond it.

The resolution is not reached because one does not go beyond the continuous process of self transcendence.⁴⁵⁵ Insofar as the infinite is nothing else than going beyond the finite, it can be seen that there is already an implicit unity present. What is needed in order to realize this unity as an actual, affirmative unity, is to drop the notion of the infinite as somehow existing as a beyond that is independent of the finite. This is fulfilled by seeing how the infinite as it is conceived in its reciprocal relationship with the finite only undergoes the same dialectics of the finite. Something is nothing other than *that which is something by going beyond itself*. The infinite, by going beyond its negation, is exactly that which the finite also is. There is therefore no intrinsic difference between the two – they are both something self-transcending; self-unifying by being self-transcending, unifying not only by forming a unity with themselves but also with their opposites, since the opposite other is really the very same original something.

For the transition from the reciprocal determination of the finite and the infinite to the affirmative infinity it is only necessary to *know what ones says* or to reflect upon what is being said:

Wenn gesagt wird, was das Unendliche ist, nämlich die Negation des Endlichen, so wird das Endliche selbst mit ausgesprochen; es kann zur Bestimmung des Unendlichen nicht entbehrt werden. Man bedarf zu wissen, was man sagt, um die Bestimmung des Endlichen im Unendlichen zu finden.⁴⁵⁶

It only seems to be the case that there are two different acts of transcendence involved – one from the finite to the infinite, and one from the infinite to the finite – but both exhibit the very same movement, namely of something coming back to itself through its negation.⁴⁵⁷ This movement is their essence. Knowing what one says in this context means realizing that one is saying *the same* when one is saying what the finite is and what the infinite is. Surprisingly perhaps, Hegel

455 TWA 5:155=GW 21:129.

456 TWA 5:157=GW 21:131. Cf. TWA 5:161=GW 21:134: "Aber der uendliche Progreß spricht mehr aus, es ist in ihm auch der *Zusammenhang* der auch Unterschiedenen gesetzt, jedoch zunächst nur noch als Übergang und Abwechslung; es ist nur in einer einfachen Reflexion von uns zu sehen, was in der Tat darin vorhanden ist."

457 TWA 5:162=GW 21:135.

wants to avoid saying that the true infinite is the unity of the finite and the infinite. The reason for this is that “unity” means “abstrakte, bewegungslose Sichselbstgleichheit.”⁴⁵⁸ Both the infinite and its moments are determinations that essentially exhibit *becoming*; they both self-transform. Still, it is clearly a vital point that the finite and the infinite also exhibit the same movement and therefore enter into a unity as two moments of *Dasein*, as self-transcendence. *Dasein* in this way is being that consists of the relationship between the limited and the unlimited. The main point then is most likely that Hegel wants to avoid the simple formula of saying that “the infinite and finite are one.” As we will see, what he actually does is to give a dialectical critique of this notion.

Before we turn to this issue, we can note that the important result of the treatment of *Dasein* is that finitude or negation is understood as the *ideal*. This is the most fundamental claim of Hegel’s absolute idealism: The finite is ideal.⁴⁵⁹ What this means is, firstly, that when the finite is taken as being opposed to the infinite, i.e. *not* as the self-transcending inherently infinite finite, then it is the *infinite* that is real, not the finite. Secondly, the idealist thesis involved here is not that finite existence is ultimately dependent on God or a form of absolute subjectivity, but that finitude is a moment of the true infinite “als seine Bestimmung, [ein] Inhalt, der unterschieden, aber nicht *selbstständig seiend*, sondern als *Moment* ist.”⁴⁶⁰ This forms the basis of Hegel’s doctrine of the idea, which we will return to later. Here the important point to notice is that negation receives a new significance, as part of the logical exposition, but only an ideal, or we could also say, abstract significance. If we confuse the finite with the real, then we *forget* the concept of it, its *Ansichsein* as *Sein-für-Anderes*, or its processual nature.⁴⁶¹

7.3.4 “*wo in dem Widerspruch der Einheit zweier Bestimmungen und des Gegensatzes derselben verharret wird*”

With the claim that the finite and the infinite are reciprocal determinations, Hegel makes a definite break with the philosophy of his time. The bad infinity and the concept of an ought that is only realized as a process that is infinitely

458 TWA 5:163 f.=GW 21:136.

459 English does not have the distinction between *ideal* and *ideell*. With the English *ideal* I refer to the German *ideell* and not *ideal*. The point is that the determination of finitude is abstract or less real, in the sense of less representative of the concept, than infinity. If anything, infinity is more *ideal* than finitude in the sense of more perfect or in accordance with “the high ideal” of the concept or the idea. Cf. TWA 5:172=GW 21:142 f.

460 TWA 5:165=GW 21:137.

461 TWA 5:160=GW 21:133.

repeated are both expressions of a contradiction that presents itself as a *resolution* and as something *absolutely final*. The speculative is a resolution into unity and is only final insofar as the negativity of the preceding dialectics comes to a definite end as the positive unity of the previously separate elements (the speculative is hence open, or undetermined, with regards to any subsequent dialectics). The process that the bad infinite inherently is depends on exhibiting the relationship between the *unity* of two determinations (here infinity and finitude) and the *separation* of the same as contradictory. The process, according to Hegel, runs as follows, starting with the unity of the determinations:

1. Unity: The finite is the *Aufhebung* of itself, it includes its negation, the infinite, in itself.
2. Separation: The infinite is the beyond of the finite.
3. Unity: Beyond the infinite there is another finite, but this finite is included in the infinite itself.
4. Separation: This finite is, however, itself a negation of the infinite as such.⁴⁶²

What is demanded in order resolve this contradiction in order to understand the affirmative infinite and not remain in the continual, never-ending restatement of unity, separation, unity, separation, etc., is the *consciousness that the unity and the separation are inseparable* from each other.⁴⁶³ Hegel underlines that this consciousness is not based on an equal recognition of the correctness of both the claim of unity and of separation. The both-and is *another form of the same contradiction*. The consciousness of the inseparability of unity and separation in the above sense is based on the recognition that both are *ideal*. With every sentence we *hear* a certain statement that is always a negation of something – when something is a unity, we hear unity, when it is separate, we hear separation – but with the recognition of the ideality of the opposite determination, we should listen more deeply and hear the opposite of that which is claimed, since we are conscious that both contradictory claims are actually inseparable.

Earlier it was asked if the unity of the opposites established by speculation itself does not establish an opposite, namely the state of separation of the unified determinations (the state in which the understanding fixates them). At least in the case of the determination of becoming, a contradiction results or is implicit in the determination itself because of its emphasis on unity, as

462 TWA 5:166 f.=GW 21:138 f.

463 TWA 5:167 f.=GW 21:138 f.

opposed to separateness. Here, in the treatment of the finite and infinite, Hegel claims that the unity and separateness of two determinations are the very same inseparability,⁴⁶⁴ and so it seems that the principle of speculation (the unity of opposites) is fully realized.

One obvious objection is that even the claim that insists on the inseparability of unity and separation establishes its own opposite, namely the insistence on the separation of unity and separation. This is what would be claimed at the standpoint of the bad infinite. This standpoint can have its own representatives just as the standpoint of fully realized speculation can, and therefore both positions are definite, and, seemingly at least, finite. It is indeed difficult to find a reason why there is no difference between these standpoints, as would be demanded in order to also resolve this opposition speculatively. It seems to me that the only option is to claim that the speculative standpoint includes the standpoint of the bad infinite such that it does justice to this standpoint in a way that also its representatives would agree on. From the speculative standpoint one would *hear the opposite* of what the representatives of the bad infinite say, but one would have to *express* this opposite as something that *denies* the standpoint of the bad infinite, i.e. the affirmation of the separation of the finite and the infinite. It seems then that there is a definite sense in which the speculative, insofar as it is expressed, establishes the opposite of what is intended by the expression. So either the speculative is inexpressible, or it must, in the end, be something that has a contradictory opposite.

It may also very well be the case that the *reflexive* determinations that are used to say what the speculative is – determinations such as unity and inseparability – are inherently inadequate, and that this inadequacy is remedied by the determinations of the concept, in particular that of the idea. It could be noted that after the treatment of contradiction in relation to the constellation of being-nothing-becoming and in the doctrine of *Dasein*, Hegel seems less concerned with contradiction. Maybe the reason for this is, as in the Jena-manuscript, with the determination of the true infinite, contradiction has been overcome as something that has to be dwelt upon in the exposition of the determinations of pure thinking. This suggests, furthermore, that Hegel may at this point have developed the vocabulary of thought-determinations that he needs in order to satisfy the principle of speculation, of resolving all contradiction, all opposition, into an all-encompassing unity. The matter is, however, not that simple.

464 TWA 5:171=GW 21:142: "Diese *Einheit* des Unendlichen und Endlichen und deren *Unterscheidung* sind dasselbe Untrennbare als die Endlichkeit und Unendlichkeit."

The description of the relationship of the *unity of the finite and the infinite* and the *separateness of the finite and infinite* takes on the same form as that of the resolution of two opposed determinations into a unity, as in the resolution of being and nothing into becoming. First of all there are the two contradictory claims: (1) The finite and the infinite are a unity, and (2) the finite and the infinite are different and opposed.⁴⁶⁵ These two are then repeated indefinitely due to the unresolved dialectical nature of the claims. The resolution, says Hegel, does not consist of a recognition that both claims are “equally correct” and “equally incorrect” – this would simply be another form of the contradiction.⁴⁶⁶ The resolution lies in the notions of *ideality* and *moment* and the recognition that:

[...] jene eintönige Abwechslung ist faktisch sowohl die Negation der *Einheit* als der *Trennung* derselben. In ihr ist ebenso faktisch das oben Aufgezeigte vorhanden, daß das Endliche über sich hinaus und in das Unendliche fällt, aber ebenso über dasselbe hinaus sich selbst wieder erzeugt findet, hiermit darin nur mit sich zusammengeht wie das Unendliche gleichfalls, so daß dieselbe Negation der Negation sich zur *Affirmation* resultiert, welches Resultat sich damit als ihre Wahrheit und Ursprünglichkeit erweist. In diesem Sein hiermit als der *Idealität* der Unterschiedenen ist der Widerspruch nicht abstrakt verschwunden, sondern aufgelöst und versöhnt, und die Gedanken sind nicht nur vollständig, sondern sie sind auch *zusammengebracht*. Die Natur des spekulativen Denkens zeigt sich hieran als einem ausgeführten Beispiele in ihrer bestimmten Weise, sie besteht allein in dem Auffassen der entgegengesetzten Momente in ihrer Einheit. Indem jedes, und zwar faktisch, sich an ihm zeigt, sein Gegenteil an ihm selbst zu haben und in diesem mit sich zusammenzugehen, so ist die affirmative Wahrheit diese sich in sich bewegende Einheit, das Zusammenfassen beider Gedanken, ihre Unendlichkeit, – die Beziehung auf sich selbst, nicht die unmittelbare, sondern die unendliche.⁴⁶⁷

There are many points here that we have already encountered in connection to the determinate negation as the transition from dialectics to speculation. We have an affirmation, or something positive, that results from something negative, the resolution or abstract disappearance of a contradiction, and

465 TWA 5:166 f.=GW 21:138.

466 TWA 5:168=GW 21:159.

467 TWA 5:168=GW 21:139.

conceiving oppositions in their unity. Some points appear new, however. Hegel speaks of a negation of the negation, a result that shows itself as truth and origin (*Ursprünglichkeit*), the ideality of the differentiated, the completion and bringing together of thoughts, affirmative truth as the unity that moves itself in itself, and infinite self-relation.

The use of the phrase “negation of the negation” here concerns the transition to the speculative unity. Earlier it was used to describe determinations that are not in unity with their opposite but rather the negation of their own negative. Clearly then the negation of the negation is a conceptual tool that has different uses, much in the same way as the determinate negation.

How the speculative is the truth is not necessary to elaborate at this point. We have already given an outline of the main features of the concept of truth in Hegel (see 6.2 [9], and also 9.2.3). How the speculative, as the truth, is also something primordial (the origin/die *Ursprünglichkeit*) is, however, unclear. In the exposition of *Dasein* it was revealed that the *Ansichsein* of something was not the simple something as such, but the something that essentially transcends itself. We can take this also as a sense in which the speculative arises, i.e. that the speculative is the real *Ansichsein* of the understanding, that the understanding has in itself to go beyond itself, and that *this* is the original sense of the understanding that is realized fully in speculation. This can be easily recognized when we consider that the original activity of thinking is that of relating a manifold to a unity. The understanding as reflective activity brings unity to difference as well as opposition (relating species to a genus). It is only when the result of the reflective activity is posited as a separate, clearly defined opposed determination above and beyond the manifold, that the understanding goes fully into its fixating or isolating mode. The result of this process, the isolated fundamental concepts of the understanding, forms the ground for dialectics, which opens up for the speculative unity of opposites. This brings together and unifies the determinations of pure thinking, through being a movement that both reveals the dialectical movement inherent in them and brings them into a more and more complete speculative concept. The unity moves itself in itself, i.e. it is a complex, self-specifying unity, a self-particularizing and individualizing universal (something which will be treated later on in the chapter on the method). The meaning of infinite self-relation also belongs to this more methodical aspect, in that what is self-relating is thought itself (at first as pure being), which relates to itself through being specified in finite determinations, as this or that determination, which is then, furthermore, in the way we have seen, also connected to the self-transcendence of finite thinking. Thinking relates infinitely to itself in its finite determinations; only through them does it become infinite. It has in itself to become

them, so its relation to them is therefore a self-relation that does not limit it. Rather, thinking realizes itself in and through its determinations.

What is becoming more and more clear at this point is that the fundamental logical determinations and their movements not only belong to the actual progress of the logic but are also fundamental to the methodical reflection on what is happening. Reflection notices movement-structures and gives its components names such as “the understanding,” “dialectics” and “speculation.” For instance, the points made about the negation of the negation, where a new affirmation arises, not only apply to the determination of *Dasein* but also to the points that are made about the becoming of the speculative unity of determinations, which is also an affirmation (unity) that arises from the negation of separateness.

It could be tempting to interpret the fact that infinity is both the unity of infinity and finitude as well as their separateness to mean that contradiction has reached its final end at this point, that in the affirmative infinity all contradictions are resolved and that the language of contradiction is replaced by the language of ideality or the moment. This, however, is not the case, as we soon learn from the exposition of the determination of *Fürsichsein*. The determination of *Fürsichsein* contains the determination of (the qualitative) *one*, which furthermore consists of six separate moments that are posited as separate but equally inseparable: “Somit muß von jeder Bestimmung ebensowohl ihr Gegenteil gesagt werden; dieser Widerspruch ist es, der bei der abstrakten *Beschaffenheit der Momente* die Schwierigkeit ausmacht.”⁴⁶⁸ Obviously then, contradiction continues to play a part in Hegel’s logic, and infinity does not represent any final dissolution of contradiction, and neither does *Fürsichsein*, even though it is “das qualitative Sein vollendet [...]”.⁴⁶⁹ We will soon turn to Hegel’s treatment of contradiction as a determination as such in the doctrine of essence. Before that, however, we will consider the one place in which Hegel mentions the *indeterminate negation* and how it differs from the determinate negation.

7.4 Indeterminate and Determinate Negation

Within the logic of being, Hegel in one instance speaks of an indeterminate negation, and in another he again makes use of the term “determinate negation.” I will not go deeply into the meaning and significance of the way Hegel uses these terms here, since he does not introduce anything specifically new.

⁴⁶⁸ TWA 5:182=GW 21:151.

⁴⁶⁹ TWA 5:174=GW 21:144.

What must be noted, however, is that in contrast to the speculative determinate negation, Hegel now puts emphasis on how a determinate negation is an exclusion of an opposite and not an inclusion of two opposites in a higher unity.

7.4.1 *Indeterminate Negation*

The indeterminate negation appears in passing in Hegel's treatment of *Fürsichsein*. As a contrast to the determinate negation it will enable us to shed some light – although not much – on the determinate negation generally. *Fürsichsein* is “die in das einfache Sein zusammengesunkene Unendlichkeit,”⁴⁷⁰ the unity of the finite and infinite as a steady movement of the determinations into each other conceived of as *one* complex nature, a being on its own that has itself before itself and, furthermore, *is* that which it has before itself.

This logical determination is similar to consciousness and in particular self-consciousness. Consciousness always has an object before itself, but the object, as a particular moment in consciousness, is nothing more than what it is for consciousness. Still, we have a notion that the object is also separate from consciousness, which leads to ideas such as the thing in itself or that the object is the sum of its appearances. With self-consciousness, *Fürsichsein* is more completely realized since that which is before consciousness is nothing other than consciousness itself, the self-awareness of the intentional structure. Within this structure consciousness has itself before itself exactly as the structure of having something appear before itself. In short: It has itself before itself – it is one with itself. This *one* is the further determination of *Fürsichsein*.

As a traditional philosophical determination *Fürsichsein* is the monad of Leibniz. Each monad is its own world and is completely indifferent to all others. As a concrete representation, *Fürsichsein* is for instance the atom in physics or the individual will in political science.⁴⁷¹ As a logical determination it is the negation of the dialectical framework of determination, in which everything is determined as being intrinsically related to its negation, as having in itself that of becoming other or being itself in becoming other. The one is incapable of change, it is the dissolved state of the previous determinations, a state in which all difference and manifoldness are gone.⁴⁷² In this way the one is empty or emptiness itself. But this emptiness, as far as the one is taken as something existing – such as in the model of the atom – the emptiness is

470 TWA 5:176=GW 21:146.

471 TWA 5:186=GW 21:154 f.

472 TWA 5:183=GW 21:152.

outside of the one.⁴⁷³ The *realized* one is such that it has *only* itself before itself, and as such excludes any otherness.⁴⁷⁴ But it is itself equally the unity of something and other,⁴⁷⁵ and therefore it excludes itself from itself. The one that is excluded from itself is *another* one that also excludes itself from itself and therefore starts to posit the many. The one seems to have an other as far as it is only that which is immediately itself and therefore only has the other as an emptiness to which it is indifferent. But the one itself collapses into emptiness, since there is nothing in it to differentiate. The one finds the indifference that it has in relationship to emptiness within itself. In other words, the other of the one is not an other for it; either the other is emptiness or that which it has before itself.

It is because the one excludes the other as a real other that it becomes many ones:

Fürsichsein des Eins ist jedoch wesentlich die Idealität des Daseins und des Anderen; es bezieht sich nicht als auf ein Anderes, sondern nur *auf sich*. Indem aber das Fürsichsein als Eins, als für sich *Seiendes*, als *unmittelbar* Vorhandenes fixiert ist, ist seine *negative* Beziehung *auf sich* zugleich Beziehung auf ein *Seiendes*; und da sie ebensosehr negativ ist, bleibt das, worauf es sich bezieht, als ein *Dasein* und ein *Anderes* bestimmt; als wesentlich Beziehung *auf sich selbst* ist das Andere nicht die unbestimmte Negation, als Leeres, sondern ist gleichfalls *Eins*. Das Eins ist somit *Werden zu vielen Eins*.⁴⁷⁶

The meaning of “negative relation to itself” is that the one has an other, which it relates to, and through relating to this as different it relates to itself, since it is itself “this-which-is-not-that.” The one must therefore have an other, though this other is excluded as other. This exclusion of the other means that the other must be just as present as the one itself. This other is a negation, but not an indeterminate negation; it is an other that is determinate, a determination that stems from the fact that the other has a relationship to itself. The one is complete self-relation, therefore the other that the one excludes as other is also one, although an other one.

The other one of the one is a relationship to itself because it is both a *Dasein* and an other. Firstly, it has a limit over against the one, which makes it into

473 TWA 5:184=GW 21:153.

474 TWA 8:203=Enz. I § 96.

475 TWA 8:205=Enz. I § 97.

476 TWA 5:186 f.=GW 21:155.

Dasein – something that is here, beyond the one, and not there, in the one. Secondly, it is the other of the one, the other that is excluded from being an other for the one. This is the emptiness in which there is no other, everything being pure indifference, just as in the one itself. This double nature is what makes it into a determinate negation of the one. The other one that must be posited outside of the one cannot be another of the one, since the one is everything. As everything falls into the one, the other as other falls outside of it; this other that is also one falls outside of the one and is immediately another one with another one falling outside of it.

This is indeed a complex conceptual movement. The way Hegel uses the contrast between an indeterminate and determinate negation here (the determinate negation is only referred to implicitly through the contrast) is similar to the way he used it in the Jena-manuscript. There the main point was that humanity was self-determining and therefore a determinate negation of the theoretical I, which is also self-determining, making all negations of it into an indeterminate *Anstoß*. Here the point is that the void outside of the one is itself determinate in the sense of being self-related. The void is therefore itself also a one, and the one becomes many. The contrast between determinate and indeterminate negation here is therefore one that Hegel uses in the generation of the many from the one on the level of pure thinking.

7.4.2 *Determinate Negation as “Kälte, Finsternis und dergleichen bestimmte Negationen”*

In comment three to the unity of becoming Hegel speaks of a certain form of determinate negations, such as cold and darkness. The context is a consideration of forms of *nothingness* that are conceivable in a specific way. One such form of nothingness is *absence of being*. The specific examples Hegel uses are: “Coldness” as the absence of warmth and “darkness” as the absence of light.⁴⁷⁷ This conception of nothing corresponds to the *nihil privativum* in Kant. Kant describes it as the concept of the lack of some object (Kant too mentions “coldness” as an example, and also “shadow”) and is based on the contrast between reality and negation. The former being *something* while the latter being *nothing*.⁴⁷⁸

The point Hegel is exploring with regards to the determinate negation of coldness and darkness is that the nothing that is opposed to *something* is not the nothing that is opposed to *being*. When something is determined as the

477 TWA 5:197=GW 21:89.

478 B 347.

absence of something, it stands in an intrinsic relationship to this something as its negation. The negation of a reality is a “negative nothing,” which Hegel understands as something affirmative, a negation of the negation.⁴⁷⁹ The negation has a reality of its own. In other words, the negation of a specific determinateness is itself a specific form of determinateness. Coldness and darkness are in this way determinate negations; each is a negative nothing, a nothing intrinsically related to that which it is a nothing of, i.e. a negation of its negation, and therefore affirmative. For Hegel, absence cannot be interpreted as pure nothing. The pure nothing of the absence is something that can only be intended in thinking, but which turns out to be determinate, because any indeterminateness is also determinate.

Hegel goes on to point out that coldness indeed has a determinate quality in sensation, and that the colors that we see have their root in darkness, which determines light to be colors – in pure light and pure darkness nothing would be seen.⁴⁸⁰ The point is that though such determinations as coldness and darkness have a specific nature of their own, they are also intrinsically relational determinations, meaning that for instance light and darkness is a relationship of polarity. Similarly, determinations such as “father” and “son” are completely relational, though there still is a distinctness to each determination (a concrete father and son may of course also have other determinations that do not concern the father-son-relationship).⁴⁸¹

Traditionally one side of such pairs is treated as real and other as derived. Light is real, darkness, as absence of light, is derived. In the case of father and son it is much easier to realize that the determinations are relational. Showing that each side of the pair has a reality of its own but is still intrinsically related to the other is something that must be done in each specific case. It is, however, a main point of Hegel’s logic to show that all negations are, on the level of pure thinking, both determinate and relational. For all stable determinations the direction of the dialectics is from determinateness to indeterminacy or relatedness. The complete conceptual framework for this is, however, not developed until the doctrine of essence. After the stable determinations have become fluid and indeterminate, it is the task of speculation to show how the initial stable and opposed determinations can be integrated, which then brings unity to the differentiated and fluid determinations.

479 TWA 5:108=GW 21:89.

480 TWA 5:108=GW 21:89.

481 Cf. TWA 6:77=GW 11:288.

7.5 A Comment on the Principle *Omnis Determinatio est Negatio*

Two related notions are common to rationalist metaphysics, namely that the infinite is the primary being or reality and that the determination of finite beings implies a limitation of the primary being, making the finite being secondary and, in some sense or another, unreal or at least derived. For instance, determination can be viewed as “cutting something off” or abstracting something from the unlimited (Descartes) or the universal concept of being (Malebranche). For Leibniz any created being is characterized by a lack or is essentially related to non-reality.⁴⁸² If the determinations were real, they would introduce contradiction into the fully real and infinite being.⁴⁸³

Both the general notions and the concrete examples are all recognizable in Hegel’s doctrine of *Dasein*. However, he shows most interest for Spinoza’s notion of determination as limitation or negation, formulated through the dictum *omnis determinatio est negatio*. Although the sentence in this form is not found in Spinoza’s writings, it is beyond doubt that the idea is Spinozian in nature. In a letter dated June 2th 1674 Spinoza talks about the determination of figure and how its determination is “nothing but a negation,” since “determination is negation” (*determinatio negatio est*).⁴⁸⁴ It is clear then that the notion that “determination is negation” is a general notion and determination of figure is an example of it. However, it is unclear whether Hegel got the formulation from Spinoza or whether he got it from Jacobi;⁴⁸⁵ the first formulation

482 Röd, Wolfgang: “Omnis determinatio est negatio,” in: *Grenzen und Grenzüberschreitungen: XIX. Deutscher Kongress für Philosophie*. Wolfgang Hogebe, Joachim Bromand, (eds.), Akademie Verlag, 2004, p. 478.

483 Kant comments on this in *KrV* B 330. He points out that the notion of real opposition makes it possible to conceive the conflict between determinations through other categories than contradiction. This essentially removes the problem that the old metaphysicians experienced, at least for the sensory realm. The opposition of this realm, when combined, would result in zero or neutrality, not in contradiction.

484 Letter L(L), Spinoza, Benedict de: *Improvement of the Understanding, Ethics and Correspondence*. New York: Cosimo 2006, p. 375: “As to the doctrine that figure is negation and not anything positive, it is plain that the whole of matter considered indefinitely can have no figure, and that figure can only exist in finite and determinate bodies. For he who says, that he perceives a figure, merely indicates thereby, that he conceives a determinate thing, and how it is determinate. This determination, therefore, does not appertain to the thing according to its being, but, on the contrary, is its non-being. As then figure is nothing else than determination, and determination is negation, figure, as has been said, can be nothing but negation.”

485 Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich: *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelsohn*. Hamburg: Meiner, 2000, p. 28, 95.

of the whole sentence *omnis determinatio est negatio* appears in Hegel's Jacobi-review. Hegel's addition of *omnis* only seems to underline the point that there are no exceptions to this rule.⁴⁸⁶ The point for Jacobi, in explaining Spinoza, is the by now familiar point that singular existing things, as far as they are determinate, are unreal, since their determinateness comes from being separated from the infinite, which, although indeterminate, is the "only truly real being," or, as Jacobi says, quoting Spinoza, the "*ens reale, hoc est, est omne esse, & præter quod nullum datur esse.*"⁴⁸⁷

When Hegel states that the principle of *omnis determinatio est negatio*, "der große Satz des Spinoza,"⁴⁸⁸ is of "durchgängiger Wichtigkeit"⁴⁸⁹ and even "unendlicher Wichtigkeit,"⁴⁹⁰ this does not mean that he subscribes to it as the principle for speculative thinking. In fact, his criticism of Spinoza is directly linked to a critique of this principle:

Der Verstand hat Bestimmungen, die sich nicht widersprechen. Die Negation ist einfache Bestimmtheit. Die Negation der Negation ist Widerspruch, sie negiert die Negation; so ist sie Affirmation, ebenso ist sie aber auch Negation überhaupt. Diesen Widerspruch kann der Verstand nicht aushalten; er ist das Vernünftige. Dieser Punkt fehlt dem Spinoza, und das ist sein Mangel. Spinozas System ist der in den Gedanken erhobene absolute Pantheismus und Monotheismus. Die absolute Substanz des Spinoza ist nichts Endliches, natürliche Welt. Dieser Gedanke, diese Anschauung ist der letzte Grund, die Identität von Ausdehnung und Gedanke. Wir haben vor uns zwei Bestimmungen, das Allgemeine, das an und für sich Seiende, und zweitens die Bestimmung des Besonderen und Einzelnen, die Individualität. Nun ist von dem Besonderen, dem Einzelnen nicht schwer aufzuzeigen, daß es ein Beschränktes überhaupt ist, daß sein Begriff überhaupt von einem Anderen abhängt, daß es abhängig ist, nicht wahrhaft für sich selbst

486 Saying "Socrates is rational because humans are rational and Socrates is human" is not significantly different from saying "Socrates is rational because *all* humans are rational and Socrates is an animal"; the "all" must be implied if the first inference is to be valid. Similarly, when Spinoza argues for a certain point from the general idea that determination is negation, then it certainly would be strange to say that only *some*, i.e. not all, determination is negation.

487 Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich: *Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an Herrn Moses Mendelsohn*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2000, p. 95.

488 TWA 18:288.

489 Said of "determinatio est negatio," GW 11:87.

490 TWA 5:121=GW 21:101.

existierend, so nicht wahrhaft wirklich. In Rücksicht des Bestimmten hat Spinoza so den Satz aufgestellt: *Omnis determinatio est negatio*; also ist nur das Nichtbesondere, das Allgemeine wahrhaft wirklich, ist nur substantiell. Die Seele, der Geist ist ein einzelnes Ding, ist als solches beschränkt; das, wonach er ein einzelnes Ding ist, ist eine Negation, und er hat so nicht wahrhafte Wirklichkeit. Die einfache Einheit des Denkens bei sich selbst sprach er nämlich als die absolute Substanz aus.⁴⁹¹

The implicit point is that Spinoza's substance indeed transcends the understanding, and that through the understanding it becomes a transcendent beyond. The contradictions involved in determinate being are simply posited as being resolved in the infinite, true being, without any account of how this is actually possible in a way that meets the demands of reason, i.e. living, or dialectical, contradiction-resolving philosophical speculation. In the Jacobi-review Hegel makes it clear that what is lacking in Spinoza is the mediation between the one substance and its attributes, or between the universal and its particular forms.⁴⁹² The mediation can be found, Hegel suggests, in his own doctrine of negation. Hegel points out that Spinoza's substance is supposed to be that in which every particular being is resolved or disappears as a particular, but the substance itself is a negation from the negation that is involved in every determinate being according to the principle of *omnis determinatio est negatio*. The substance in this way is not free from negation and therefore it can be said that Hegel radicalizes Spinoza's principle, so that it also includes the infinite.

But does not the fact that Hegel radicalizes *omnis determinatio est negatio* mean that he accepts it in a more universal way, i.e. that the addition of *omnis* implies that the principle is true also for the infinite? This is a complex matter. I believe it does not do Hegel full justice to simply say that he universalizes the principle. As we have seen, determination, on Spinoza's account, always means removing oneself from the truly real, unless there is some other principle of determination or some way to relate to the finite that does not exclude the true infinite being. Hegel's doctrine of *Dasein* can be seen as a contribution to this problem, in that the relationship between finite and infinite is re-thought; an infinite that is opposed to the finite as the truly real being is itself something finite. The truly real must include not only the finite, but also contain an account of how the *false* infinite that stands over against the finite becomes true infinity. This means that the notion of *omnis determinatio est negatio* has

491 TWA 20:163 f.

492 TWA 4:434.

to be transformed; as a principle it only gives rise to the framework of finite determination.⁴⁹³

As far as I can see, the confusion around how to interpret Hegel's account of this principle has to do with the difficulty of understanding speculative thinking, i.e. how to understand how Hegel both builds on and rejects this principle (and insofar as he rejects it, he would be in agreement with the philosophy of difference⁴⁹⁴). Firstly, it is clear that the process of dialectical determination relies on a negation of an original determination, but in a way that implies a connection with its opposite, and therefore it is not a matter of any stable determination and negation, where these are thought of as mutually exclusive, although also essentially related. Dialectics breaks with the framework of *omnis determinatio est negatio* as far as this principle is interpreted as a principle of the understanding (e.g. when *Dasein* is conceived of as the affirmative and simple negation of its negation), but dialectics also follows the principle as far as something becomes more determinate when it is brought in to a relationship with its opposite (as when it is realized that *something* is in a specific, dialectical sense also its own negation, i.e. *other*). Secondly, it is clear that negation can be determination for Hegel. Some negations are abstract or complete (all) negation, but there are also negations that are determinate. The latter are determinations, new concepts, arising from negation. Still, it is clear that not all negation is determination for Hegel.⁴⁹⁵ His whole doctrine of the determinate negation is a matter of clarifying how some negations are or give rise to determination.

In fact, the principle of *omnis determinatio* is itself dialectically unstable.⁴⁹⁶ This is in accordance with Hegel's view that all abstract principles are one-sided

493 TWA 4:434: "Es kommt hierbei nur darauf an, die Stellung und Bedeutung des Negativen richtig ins Auge zu fassen. Wenn es nur als Bestimmtheit der endlichen Dinge genommen wird (*omnis determinatio est negatio*), so ist damit die Vorstellung aus der absoluten Substanz heraus, hat die endlichen Dinge aus ihr herausfallen lassen und erhält sie außer ihr."

494 According to Deleuze, the philosophy of difference is characterized by its rejection of *omnis determinatio est negatio*. Cf. Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 63.

495 As is explicitly claimed by Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001, p. 122: "Die Negation kann überhaupt nur sein als *bestimmte*. Das ist die grundlegende Einsicht Hegels."

496 Utz has pointed out a similar problem with the principle of *omnis determinatio est negatio* to the one I am presenting here, which he calls *the dilemma of determination*. When interpreting the principle, one is faced with the problem of either having to understand negation as *identical* with determination or as a part of determination, although the determination itself is something more than negation. Utz shows that both options are unacceptable

or finite, and therefore must go under. We can become aware that *omnis determinatio est negation* is unstable by considering the following: If the principle holds universally it must be applied to itself. According to the principle, all determinations must have a negation it is inextricably tied to as something it negates. So the principle, which is of course a determination, must also have a negation. Without the negation being established, there would be no principle. Hence the principle that all determinations are negations leads to there being an opposite; there is, according to the principle itself, some determination that is not a negation. In other words, *omnis determinatio est negatio* is a self-defeating principle; it is self-contradictory, or impossible. However, if we universalize the opposite (that there are some determinations that are not negations) into the principle that *no determination is negation*,⁴⁹⁷ we get entangled in a contradiction as well: The principle is itself a determination that negates its opposite, and thereby itself denies what it affirms. In other

and concludes that there is a fundamental self-contradiction inherent in this account of determination: "Es ergibt sich also das Problem, daß Bestimmung nichts anderes als Negation sein kann und nichts allein Negation sein kann. Bestimmung ist damit ein in sich Widersprüchliches. Damit ist es aber ein in sich selbst Unmögliches: etwas, das notwendig nicht sein kann." (Utz, Konrad: *Philosophie des Zufalls*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005, p. 47). Utz arrives at a solution with the introduction of a doctrine of *neti-neti*, i.e. the view that determination must include both immediacy and mediacy (be both affirmative and a negation), but in a way that we cannot state in an affirmative way, but only through denials: "Die Wirklichkeit der Bestimmung ist also so vorzustellen, daß sie Unmittelbares und Vermitteltes zugleich ist, aber nicht so, daß Unmittelbarkeit und Vermittlung in ihr schlechthin identisch sind, noch so, daß sie schlechthin differenziert sind, noch so, daß sie in verschiedene Anteile, Aspekte oder ähnliches differenziert sind, noch so, daß sie irgendeine Art von Gemisch darstellen, und auch nicht so, daß beide auf verschiedene Ebenen angesiedelt sind, wie etwa "Inhaltsebene" und "Formebene" (Utz, Konrad: *Philosophie des Zufalls*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005, p. 51). Consequently, the result is a form of unification that is *inexplicable* or beyond reason. Implicitly Utz is arguing against a Hegelian speculative resolution, in rejecting any affirmative language of both-and, i.e. that of speculation; however, speculation is for Hegel in fact *also* a matter of neither-nor, which means that it in some sense is supposed to be beyond *both-and* and *neither-nor* determinations. Exactly how speculative thinking appears on such an account is a matter I will return to in the chapter on the dialectical method. The most important difference between Utz's and my account is that I show *immanently* how *omnis determinationest negatio* and its opposite are inherently self-contradictory, something which I take to point out a possible speculative unity and therefore something that goes beyond the *neti-neti*-approach and into the realm of speculation.

497 An example of something that adheres this principle is the rationalist metaphysical notion of the infinite reality that contains all affirmative being, with all negations being illusory.

words, both principles are self-contradictory. In the context of Hegel's logic this would be interpreted to mean that no abstract or one-sided principle is able to capture the whole of the movement of thinking that shows itself in the self-contradiction of finite principles.

Maybe it is possible to find another principle that somehow denies that *omnis determinatio est negatio*, but then again it is easy to see that any such principle as far as it *denies* that *omnis determinatio est negatio*, rather would confirm the principle than deny it. Similar to how the determination of a figure directly delineates a corresponding, negative figure, the determination of a principle of thinking gives rise to a corresponding negative principle. As far as we want to treat one side as the whole of reality, there will obviously be problems. This suggests that there could be some speculative unity for this dialectical movement, but I will not enter into this issue any further here. Hegel, following Spinoza, accepts negation as universal principle of *finite* determination and through this he at least departs from the idea that the finite world has any given, affirmative, content that one can account for without bringing it into a relation to its negation, to what it is not.

What then about *infinite* determination? Bringing something into a mutual relationship with its other is already approaching infinite determination, since infinite here means just that which transcends itself and enters into its opposite without losing itself in the process. Infinite determination is a matter of something becoming what it is in the very process of determination. When entering into infinite determination, something is its other, and the other goes through the very same process and therefore unites with *its* other. Thereby both unite with themselves as well, becoming *one*. Examples of objects that are particularly receptive to being determined as an infinite relation are self-consciousness and freedom.

Infinite determination is a matter of formulating sentences that themselves are an exposition of a movement or a process. However, any such exposition will implicitly imply negation insofar as it contains any definite sentences; infinite determination is not a matter of vagueness. Rather, it is a matter of a processual determination that reaches an end point where all finite determinations have been given their due. Infinite determinations seem vague to the understanding, since it requires definite statements. It will therefore seek out contradictory interpretations of a vague statement and try to decide which one is true.

For example, the understanding could ask speculation regarding "becoming": *Is becoming or is it not?* Becoming certainly happens, so it seems to have a being. Speculatively, one could answer: It is neither, but contains both. The understanding: If it contains both, then it must in some sense be both?

Speculation: Yes, becoming is both, as a unity. The understanding: But something either *is* or *is not*; being both implies being contradictory. It is easy to imagine how such a dialogue would proceed further, and it is equally easy to see that it could reach no final end or solution, since the matter itself is infinite. Speculative determination must exhibit a contradiction, since it seeks to be a definite statement of something that transcends definiteness in the sense of finite determination, which contains negation. Infinite determination implies an attempt at transcending the form of determination that implies a negation, while still, of course, not being a simple return to a framework of determination where one relies on given, affirmative, content. Any processual, infinite determination contains definite sentences, and as such it is possible to formulate a denial of any part of the sentence as well as the whole range of sentences, including the whole process itself. Saying that something is a process is to say that it is not something that in one sense or another is fixed, rigid, unmoving and unchanging. Infinite determination only includes opposition *within* itself, and as soon as the process of determination has reached any level of specificity, i.e. formulated as a sentence that can be negated, then it is *finite* determination.

Infinite determination overcomes this problem by first stating something, then the opposite, in order to arrive at a unity of both. This unity is, however, itself a negation of separateness, and therefore finite. Infinite determination can be infinite only internally it seems, i.e. with regards to its content that has been resolved into a unity. As soon as the unity is definite, it has become finite, but this only means that this finitude can be united again with a new opposite and form a new unity. The important question is whether this process will ever end, if there is some way in which the speculative unity, although definite (having a negation), can still be seen to be immediately *as being in unity* with its separateness.

This would mean that speculation relies equally on the understanding and dialectics as far as these bring both separateness as well as an overcoming of separateness. It must be a unity of unity and separateness, i.e. with itself and its other. Still, this sentence can again be negated; a unity of separateness and unity is a negation of that which is not a unity of separateness and unity. Infinite determination seems to happen only in the moment, in the flow of sentences. In order to be living and present it relies on continual reformulation. It can have no final corpus, no final statement, but still it exists through final statements, potentially existing as any and all possible sentences. Grasping the speculative is in this way not much different from grasping language. Language, although existing as definite sentences, always requires both the speaker and the listener have the whole in view, at least implicitly (this is the

whole of *meaning* that is available in a language, as words, as combinations of words, as well as the whole of the idea that is being presented). The words of the speculative are the determinations of the understanding; the connection between them is dialectics; speculation itself is the whole of logical meaning, the whole power of ideation itself, having all opposites in view, being the mediation of everything, incapable of not uniting with its opposite. The problem for many is that Hegel with his conception of speculative thinking believes he has been able to grasp the living, infinite being in language, something which is a break with the longstanding and widely accepted view that truth, the infinite, God, etc., is in the end beyond language, forever inexpressible.⁴⁹⁸ For Hegel, the truly real, even if it is not identical with language, can *appear* in language. Not only *can* it appear in language – it *must* appear and indeed does appear every time we speak, although we may not see it. What the philosopher can do is to point this out and show how or indeed *make it* appear, in the sense of making something implicit explicit. In this way the philosopher takes part in the revelation of the true being, or the idea.

The dialectics of *omnis determinatio est negatio* and its opposite (the framework of determination as givenness without negation) shows either that determination is impossible to understand fully or that there must be some further, speculative framework that can include both or be the realization of each one-sided framework. Hegel's conception of the determinate negation as a part of the dialectical method points exactly to such a further framework in that it is a negation that brings forth a new determination; this determination is itself a negation of the separateness of a pair of opposites (fulfilling *omnis determinatio est negatio*), and since this determination is a *unity* it presents something affirmative, a new givenness that resolves the framework where two opposites stand in an exclusive relationship (thus resolving *omnis determinatio est negatio* as well as offering a new framework of determination, i.e. that of affirmative, inclusive unity). The most important aspect of this that remains to be treated is contradiction (self-contradiction), and how the "resolution" of contradiction is to be thought in the context of the dialectical method. The main question, which I have only touched upon at this point, is whether philosophical speculation for Hegel in the end offers a framework of determination that is a *final resolution of all contradictions* inherent in pure thinking, or whether contradiction somehow remains or necessarily returns to challenge *any* final speculative resolution. This will only be possible to answer after a thorough investigation of Hegel's doctrine of contradiction as presented in the logic of essence.

498 Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 63.

7.6 Summary

What has been established, is how Hegel both transforms and includes the traditional framework of determination into his logic. We have become acquainted with the way Hegel understands philosophical thinking according to the standards of dialectical-speculative reason. The logic starts with a conception of the absolute as pure being, a being beyond differentiation through which everything else is. This being shows itself to be complete indeterminacy. Implicitly, this is a critique of the idealist notion of the absolute found in Fichte and Schelling. Hegel rather goes down the path of understanding the absolute as something that has distinction in it and which shows itself through this distinction. The loss of the absolute with the dissolution of pure being is itself the process of becoming of the idea. This means, however, that there must be a way to integrate the loss into the process. Hegel does this through pointing out that indeterminacy is also determinacy, and that the confusion and contradiction that arises out of this, when properly conceived, leads to speculative unity.

Hegel's use of contradiction has brought us some trouble. First of all, it is hard to say exactly what contradiction means for Hegel, in particular in relation to the contradiction that was referred to in the context of the speculative determinate negation. Does contradiction refer to the fact that, for instance, being both is nothing and is not nothing, or is it simply the transition from being to nothing? Both maybe? Secondly, we have encountered the problem of whether or not there is a final resolution of the contradictions that keep arising within the development of the determinations of pure thinking. Speculation, as the unity of opposites, is inherently a resolution of contradiction. But, as we have seen, speculative unities themselves dissolve due to a contradiction between the unity and separateness of the unified determinations. Not even the true infinite, in which unity and separateness are inseparable, is completely free of contradiction.

The first of these problems, i.e. the problem of what the meaning of contradiction is, will be dealt with in the next chapter on the logic of essence. The second problem, concerning the final resolution of contradiction, will be dealt with in the chapter on the logic of the concept.

We have also seen that Hegel makes use of the term determinate negation with an emphasis on exclusion in the context of determinations such as coldness and darkness. As I have tried to show, the way he uses the term here is basically the same as the way he uses it in the Jena-manuscript. The determinate negation that puts emphasis on exclusion is itself an opposite of a determination, but it is also self-determining in the sense of not only being a contrast

to that which it is a negation of, but also as having the other as a part of itself. In the final chapter I will return to the issue of how to understand the relationship between excluding and including (speculative) determination.

As for the specific characteristics of the speculative determinate negation, we still have to clarify these fully. Some issues, such as how something negative can be positive, can only be answered through the following treatment of the logic of essence. With regards to the meaning of self-contradiction, we have only seen concrete examples of this in the form of dialectical reversals. What contradiction as such means in Hegel's logic is something we have to develop further. We have also seen concrete examples of how the speculative determinate negation contains that from which it results (becoming contains being and nothing as coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be), how it is a new concept and how it has content. We have, however, not gone into how the determinate negation as a new concept is both richer and higher than its predecessors. This will not be made clear until the investigation of the logic of the concept. Still, we have a better grip on the issue of how the determinate negation as a unity of opposites comes into conflict with the determinate negation as one side of an opposition, both in relation to Hegel's inconsistent use of the term as well as the conflict of speculative unity and non-unity. These are issues that we will only be able to fully address in the context of the treatment of the method in the penultimate chapter.

Determination and Negation in the Doctrine of Essence

In the following I will address issues in the doctrine of essence that relate to the determinate negation. We will, firstly, encounter another example of Hegel's actual use of the term "determinate negation." Then, secondly, we will enter into a treatment of the determinations of reflection as Hegel conceives them. This will serve to clarify Hegel's concept of opposition and contradiction, which has shown itself to be of particular importance when it comes to understanding the speculative determinate negation. We will also revisit the question of whether or not there is a final resolution of contradiction – one could also say a final speculative determinate negation – or whether the dialectical process of philosophical knowledge must be understood as never ending (and therefore possibly as an instance of a bad infinite, something Hegel most likely would seek to avoid). Finally, I will address and attempt to give sufficiently comprehensive answers to the two first main questions relating to the speculative determinate negation, namely how something negative can be positive, and how a contradiction can result in a concrete negation, and not an abstract nothing.

8.1 The Logic of Essence in General

By essence we usually understand the necessary characteristics of something, that without which it would be nothing, and, furthermore, what something is in itself, what its real nature is, as opposed to how it appears. Hegel's doctrine of essence is both a critique and development of this conception of essence. Firstly, he shows that this account of essence leads to a dialectical contradiction, i.e. the determination of essence contradicts itself through itself. Secondly, this critique forms the basis of a conception of the relationship between essence and appearance. Each determination turns out to be nothing beyond the other, both together forming a totality of a conceptual movement.

When investigating the determinations of being we saw over and over again that an initial determination shifted into its opposite and then entered into a unity with it, a unity that collapses and becomes a new determination. As far as we reflect upon this, we can already formulate the notion of essence as an underlying necessary ground (the traditional conception of essence):

The determinations of being are not what they *appear* to be, they change into their opposite, which, however, also implies a realization of their true nature, their true *Ansichsein*. As far as this *Ansichsein* is understood as something that is *intrinsically related* to its opposite, we have a notion of a comprehensive essence, an essence that shows itself as two interlinked determinations. This points to the difference between being and essence, namely that the determinations of essence are explicitly relational, while the determinations of being are only implicitly so.⁴⁹⁹

For an example of the relational framework of determination that is characteristic of essence we can look to the determinations of possibility and necessity. Each of these can be defined by each other using the opposite determination and two negations: Something necessary is something for which it is true that it is not possible that it is not, while something possible is something for which it is true that it is not necessary that it is not. However, an important general aspect of any traditional doctrine of essence is that of two opposite determinations one has some indefinite but intuitively graspable priority over the other. Essence has priority over being, the positive over the negative, necessity over possibility, inner over outer, the whole over its part, the absolute over its attributes, and so on. However, Hegel's doctrine of essence, in particular its dialectics, rests on the idea that *any such priority is not maintainable*. In other words, whenever priority is given to one of the determinations, it turns into its opposite. The prime example of this is how essence, when it is taken to be the true being of something, is itself made into a being. The point in Hegel's logic of essence is to show how essence is rather the whole structure that appears as the relationship of essence and appearance.⁵⁰⁰ First, essence appears as a *being* over against another being, of which it is the essence. Because it is this other being that makes essence into essence it is rather the other being that is essential. In this way the initial relation of priority between the determinations is reversed; essence is inessential, while that of which the inessential essence is the essence, is the real essence.

However, both the notion of essence and the notion of priority are left intact. Essence does not disappear as the guiding notion even though the priority is reversed. Furthermore, the reversed priority shows itself to be as equally unstable as the original priority. The other being was said to be essential, while its essence is inessential or had its nature fully in the being that it was the essence of. It is easy to see now that the essential other being is dependent on

499 Cf. TWA 8:228=Enz. I § 111Z.

500 Cf. Houlgate, Stephen: "Hegel's Critique of Foundationalism," in: Anthony O'Hear (ed.), *German Philosophy Since Kant*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

the inessential essence for its status as essential. Therefore this essential other being is no more essential than inessential essence itself. The determinations are therefore interdependent, fully relational or relative.⁵⁰¹ It is only on a superficial level that they can be held apart, differentiated. As far as they are fully reflected in each other, as far as they have completed their reflection in each other and the whole structure is grasped as *one whole*, essence moves into its truth, or the concept. But now we are getting ahead of ourselves.

8.2 Essence as a Determinate Negation

In the exposition of the determinations of *the essential* and *the inessential* (*Das Wesentliche und das Unwesentliche*) under the heading of illusory being (*Schein*), Hegel makes use of the term “determinate negation” for the last time in *WdL*:

Das Wesen ist das *aufgehobene* Sein. Es ist einfache Gleichheit mit sich selbst, aber insofern es die *Negation* der Sphäre des Seins überhaupt ist. So hat das Wesen die Unmittelbarkeit sich gegenüber als eine solche, aus der es geworden ist und die sich in diesem Aufheben aufbewahrt und erhalten hat. Das Wesen selbst ist in dieser Bestimmung *seiendes*, unmittelbares Wesen und das Sein nur ein Negatives in *Beziehung* auf das Wesen, nicht an und für sich selbst, das Wesen also eine *bestimmte* Negation.⁵⁰²

In general, what is meant here is the following: Essence *encompasses* all the determinations of being, and rather than being any one of them in particular, it is the fulfillment of all of them as they have developed from pure being. Essence can be characterized *through* the determinations of being – as is done over and over again by Hegel in the doctrine of essence – but essence as determination on its own always goes beyond the determinations of being. None of the determinations of being can, by themselves, give a fully appropriate account of essence. Essence emerges out of being, but as far as it has emerged, being is reduced to something that exists only in relation to essence.

The challenge now is to identify what exactly is meant by “determinate negation” here. Evidently, essence *is* a determinate negation, but it is not immediately clear why and how. First of all, it is stated that essence as such is a negation of the sphere of being. It is also stated that being is a negative in

⁵⁰¹ Cf. TWA 8:231=Enz. I § 112.

⁵⁰² TWA 6:18=GW 11:244.

relation to essence, but it is clearly the case that it is essence that is the negation that is determinate. That essence is a result that contains that from which it results (immediate being) implies a clear affinity between essence and the determinate negation in the speculative sense. It is an open question, however, what the “also” in “das Wesen also eine bestimmte Negation” refers to. It seems to be a conclusion of the whole passage; essence as a negation is determinate because it includes being, which is only the negative of essence, in itself and is itself a new, immediate being. Furthermore, the point seems to be to distinguish between, on the one hand, something that exists only as the negative of something, and, on the other, something that is self-subsisting as a fully developed totality of meaning (a determination that is in and for itself). It seems to follow that if being was self-subsisting and not only a negative in relation to essence, then essence *would not be a determinate negation*. In order to be a determinate negation in the sense referred to here, the determinate negation not only has to have a negation itself, but this negation also *has to be fully dependent on the determinate negation*. In short: Essence is a determinate negation because it is a negation of being that includes being as part of itself. “Being part of” here means that essence has both grown out of being as well as that it has transferred the immediacy of being into its own realm. In this way essence becomes the essence of appearance, and is understood as the real substantial being of being.

The way in which the determinate negation is conceived in the context of the doctrine of essence is not necessarily in opposition to the speculative determinate negation. It is easy to recognize some overlapping traits: Both are negations that are positive, both result from preceding contradictions,⁵⁰³ both contain that from which they result, both are a new concept, and both are negations with content. The differences are, firstly, that essence as a determinate negation may be a richer concept than the preceding, but still it seems wrong to treat it as a higher concept (it seems more correct to say that the concept is the higher genus, with being and essence as species). Secondly, essence is not one side of the *opposition* of being and essence since essence includes being within itself and therefore is not in opposition to being. Thirdly, essence is not a unity of opposites in the sense of being the unity of a preceding determination and its opposite.

How then does this sense of the determinate negation relate to the determinate negation as coldness and darkness? I claimed earlier that coldness and darkness as negation retain a sense of being negations in a non-relative sense.

503 As it was pointed out earlier, essence results from the contradiction between the absolute negativity arising at the end of the doctrine of essence and all of its aspects.

They are the negative *of* warmth and light, but they also have positive realities themselves. One could say that warmth and light are also negations in that they are the negative of their negatives – making the relation between the opposites completely relative – but Hegel's point in saying that coldness and darkness are determinate negations was that although they appear to be simple absences they are nonetheless equally determinate. Coldness and darkness exhibit positive, primary realities or qualities, just as do warmth and light. The general point is that the negative is real, not just absence, and in this sense determinate.

When it is claimed that essence is a determinate negation, the point is similar. Although essence starts out as the negation of being, it is not an absence of any determinate reality. Not only is this a conceptual setting characterized by explicitly relational determinations, it also takes up the determinations of being into itself and realizes itself through them, making being a part of itself. As a result, essence as a determinate negation shares the characteristic of the determinate negation as coldness and darkness. At first essence is the absence of any positive quality, but on closer analysis turns out to have a reality of its own. However, essence is further determined as that which includes its opposite as a part of itself and therefore goes beyond the main point Hegel made in claiming that coldness and darkness are determinate negations.

In the doctrine of essence Hegel develops the conceptual apparatus that enables such claims as that an opposite may include its other in itself, and it would seem that he could have made such a claim in relation to the determinations of coldness and darkness, i.e. that they in some way include their other as a part of themselves. Either coldness includes warmth or the other way around, depending on which determination is taken to be the essential one, and, on a comprehensive account, both need to be treated as essential, meaning that both movements must be executed. This is indeed one of the main overall points of the doctrine of essence; to show the way determinations explicitly form a unity of themselves and their other (without, however, entering fully into a speculative unity). Exactly how this movement proceeds will be made clear in the following interpretation of the determinations of identity, difference and contradiction.

The overall picture of the conception of the determinate negation that has taken shape at this point is that Hegel seems to be using it in different, partially overlapping, partially conflicting senses. Furthermore, the different senses seem to correspond to the stage of a process of dialectical determination in question; the point in relation to coldness and darkness is to show forth a dialectical relation within the fundamental determinations of being as they are made by the understanding, while the point in relation to essence as a

determinate negation is that dialectical relations bring determinations together that in the end will enter into a unity with each other (first, by having initial determination including the other as a part of itself, then, conversely, by the other determination including the initial determination as a part of itself).

8.3 The Determinations of Reflection

The following treatment of the determinations of reflection (identity, difference, contradiction) serves two purposes. The first is to give a concrete example of the movement of the determinations of the logic of reflection. The second is to come to terms with exactly what Hegel means with contradiction. As we will see, contradiction as a determination grows out of identity and difference, which first turns into opposition, before opposition is intensified and becomes contradiction. Furthermore, it is in this context that Hegel discusses the meaning of the determinations of positive and negative, which he takes to be the fundamental moments of the determination of opposition. This means that through the investigation of the determinations of reflection we will be able to decipher two of the characteristics of the speculative determinate negation: The way it is just as much positive as it is negative, and how the speculative determinate negation develops from “the self-contradictory.”

8.3.1 *Identity: Difference*

Identity is closely connected to the relationship between being and essence. At first, identity is nothing more than the essence that has arisen from being. Essence arises from being when all the determinations of being are fully realized, when their passing over into opposed determinations become more truly what they are. Hence any apparent difference between the determinations is reduced to nothing, leaving only their essentiality, their identity. Identity in the context of Hegel's logic therefore is about how all the determinations of being are the same. They are the same as the realization of their implicit movement into each other. Identity in this sense is not the abstract *equality* of external reflection, e.g. it is not the abstract equality of being with itself. Rather, identity is the realized unity of opposed determinations, it is a pure activity that reduces all difference to itself.

Still, identity carries with it some kind of act of comparison – or else it would become a simple being for which it is indeterminate if it is equal or different in relation to itself. The comparison that is involved in identity is, however, implicitly a differentiating of that which is identical. This differentiating is itself a difference that is immediately overcome, it is posited in order to

disappear, so that the sameness of the compared can be claimed. Identity is therefore that which is different from difference, or establishes itself through being different to difference. Difference is present only as the self-relating negativity, i.e. the negative of identity that negates itself and through this unites with *its* negative, namely identity, and therefore is “ein Nichtsein, das das Nichtsein seiner selbst ist.”⁵⁰⁴

The most problematic aspect of this is the claim that if identity is different from difference, then identity is also different – implying that identity is not itself, but rather something else, and, on further reflection, self-contradictory. Hegel notes that one usually is not aware of what is being said when it is said that identity is different from difference.⁵⁰⁵ Hegel understands such claims to imply the opposite of what is meant. In this case, claiming that identity is different from difference means that identity is difference, and hence not identity, though this is not what is meant. Having an awareness of the incongruence between what is meant and what is actually said is of decisive importance. The root of *systematic progress* is achieved by “knowing what one has already said,”⁵⁰⁶ knowing what is unavoidably implied by what is said, which is the real, and not only intended, meaning. This knowing is the awareness of the dialectical aspect of a claim, the awareness that the negative is just as much positive. “Identity is *not* difference.” The self-relating negative – in this case difference – is constitutive of the positive.

We can sum up this movement with the following steps:

1. Identity differs from difference.
2. Difference is part of identity.
3. The negative (difference) negates (differs from) itself, since it is part of identity.
4. Through this negation the negative (difference) unites with *its* negative, which is identity.

504 TWA 6:40=GW 11:261.

505 TWA 6:41=GW 11:262: “So ist [es] die leere Identität, an welcher diejenigen festhängen bleiben, welche sie als solche für etwas Wahres nehmen und immer vorzubringen pflegen, die Identität sei nicht die Verschiedenheit, sondern die Identität und die Verschiedenheit seien verschieden. Sie sehen nicht, daß sie schon hierin selbst sagen, *daß die Identität ein Verschiedenes ist*; denn sie sagen, *die Identität sei verschieden* von der Verschiedenheit; indem dies zugleich als die Natur der Identität zugegeben werden muß, so liegt darin, daß die Identität nicht äußerlich, sondern an ihr selbst, in ihrer Natur dies sei, verschieden zu sein.”

506 TWA 4:435.

The difference that differs from difference in becoming one with identity and therefore being different from itself – or rather both goes beyond itself and unites with itself in going beyond itself, since it both rejects difference and therefore equally *is* difference – is *absolute difference*. This is the difference that has become one with identity, since identity is the real difference of difference and so the realization of the absolute difference. Identity, however, as we have seen, not only has difference as a part (moment) of itself but also unites with difference, when difference is considered as the self-relating negative that makes identity into identity by returning from its opposite. Both identity and unity contain each other in themselves, they are the movement into each other that becomes a unity, and in this way both are a whole – one and the same whole – but equally moments of this whole. However, the *unity* which identity and difference are has no name; the unity is recognized *in* each of the moments as they become the whole. That identity and difference are both the whole itself as well and moments of it is to be considered as “die wesentliche Natur der Reflexion” and as “*bestimmter Urgrund aller Tätigkeit und Selbstbewegung*.”⁵⁰⁷

In a remark Hegel reflects on a contradiction that is inherent in identity; not only do identity and difference contradict each other, but also the “talk,” which only repeats the same determination – “God is God,” etc. – contradicts itself, since nothing is determined through such a repetition. The judgment *seems* to determine something – there is a subject and predicate involved. The identity, however, is only established through that they appear separate in the very form of the judgment. If their subject and predicate were completely identical, there would be no difference between saying “God” and “God is God” – but “God” is not a judgment.⁵⁰⁸

8.3.2 *Difference: Bringing the Unrelated Together*

Hegel treats difference in *WdL* as consisting of *absolute difference*, *diversity* and *opposition*. The general movement is from a strong distinction (absolute difference), to a falling apart of the distinguished (diversity), and finally to a unity that, even though it is a whole, emphasizes difference (opposition).

Absolute difference, the abiding difference that has come out of the dialectics of identity, forms the ground of *external* reflection, which isolates the moments of difference that appeared in the preceding movement. On the one hand, it is the difference that has become identity through rejecting difference (the moment of identity), on the other hand, it is the difference that has become itself through identity, a difference that is one with itself through

⁵⁰⁷ TWA 6:47=GW 11:266.

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. TWA 6:43f.=GW 11:264.

being different from identity (the moment of difference). Consequently, the moments within the doctrine of essence take on a different shape when compared to the moments within the doctrine of being. Becoming consists of the moments of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, which are transformations of the determinations of being and nothing. Becoming is an overarching determination containing both. In the doctrine of essence the moments of a determination is formed by *itself* and its opposite; the moments of (absolute) difference consists of the moments of difference and identity.

Furthermore, both moments contain the other in itself. However, the emphasis is now on what the determinations have become, on how they are reflected in relation to each other, not on what they initially appear as; difference is *identity* through being that which makes identity into itself, i.e. into that which is different from difference; difference is *different* through being that which is not itself, or is different from itself, since it is part of identity, or just is that which makes identity into identity. Still, by being different itself, difference returns to itself and affirms itself as different. When the movement of reflection is cut off at the points where difference has become identity and where it has become difference again, it becomes external; the moments are held apart and the *difference* of the moments is fixated. This gives rise to *diversity* (*Die Verschiedenheit*).

In their diversity the moments are no longer compared with regards to their inner nature or their opposite moment. They could be identical or different in their essence (which they are) but they appear as simply diverse and indifferent to what their inherent relationship to each other is or might be. The whole point of the dialectic of diversity is to bring forth the inherent relationship of that which is indifferently diverse. This, furthermore, is the establishment of the determination of *opposition*.

The dialectic of diversity may seem very abstruse, but the idea that it is based on is rather straightforward: That which is equal is not identical and therefore also unequal, and, furthermore, inequality is a relation between the unequal in which they are identical as unequal and therefore equal.⁵⁰⁹ The equal is of course equal to itself, but the *unequal is also something equal* for external reflection; the unequal relates different sides of something to each other, sides that are, as unequal, in essence only equal to themselves and indifferent to each other, simply existing side by side (in an object, in reality or within pure thinking). When introducing sides and respects as

509 Cf. TWA 8:242=Enz. § 118: "Die Gleichheit ist eine Identität nur solcher, die *nicht dieselben*, nicht identisch mit einander sind, – und die Ungleichheit ist *Beziehung* der Ungleichen."

a means of avoiding contradiction in relation to determinations such as equality and inequality, what happens is that there is no longer any ground through which the two sides can be related concretely. If they are to be related concretely, it is necessary to find the respect in which they are both equal and unequal or even identical, which means that there would no longer be any reason for claiming that they are either equal or unequal; insofar as they are inherently related they are identical – any difference between them, means they fall apart into diversity. Or at least this is the fate of the understanding. Either it gets identity and forfeits separation or it gets differentiation and forfeits connection. It cannot get both without giving itself up to dialectics. In other words, all things that are unequal are equal insofar as they are unequal; if they are simply indifferent, they share the pure indifference and are equal.

We have established the way in which the unequal becomes equal. Now we turn to the way in which the equal becomes unequal. Equality and inequality are established by an act of comparison or external reflection. That which is judged to be equal is, however, always different, and therefore the judgment that something is equal always also implies that they are unequal. We could also say that the unequal is unequal to itself, since a judgment affirming inequality implies that the objects that are judged to be unequal are related to each other and therefore equal. It is then established that the moments of diversity are interdependent, that both moments are not only moments but that they become the whole; the equal is both equal and unequal, and the unequal both equal and unequal.

All of this now comes together in the determination of *opposition*, which connects the results of the development of the determinations of identity, difference and diversity. The results of the development of identity and difference are, firstly, that they resolve into each other, and, secondly, that identity and difference are both wholes, each of which contains the other as a moment of itself (which is also the origin of the determination of diversity). The results of the development of the determination of diversity are, firstly, that moment and whole fall apart and become, respectively, two opposing *sides* and *negative unity*, while, secondly, equality and inequality dissolve into a relationship of interdependence.

How does opposition arise out of these results? What makes something into an opposition is that each indifferent side is *just as much a moment of its own as a moment of the connection of both sides to common negative unity*.⁵¹⁰ Opposition is both unity and difference in a way that makes its moments “different in one

510 TWA 6:51=GW 11:270: “Die Verschiedenheit, deren gleichgültige Seiten ebenso sehr schlechthin nur *Momente* als seiner negativen einheit sind, ist der *Gegensatz*.”

and the same identity.”⁵¹¹ An opposition – though it is a whole – puts the emphasis on difference. Furthermore, the two sides of the opposition are, in their purity, only externally differentiated; each one is only opposed, only belongs to the whole of the opposition, being nothing in itself outside of this whole. Opposition therefore takes up the externality that was one of the results of diversity. The opposition has two sides, which are emphasized as diverse when the opposition is presented as something consisting of two sides. The whole that the two sides of the opposition make out is not itself present insofar as the emphasis is on either of the two sides. Since the opposed sides have no further determination than being opposed to that which it is opposed to, they are identical. The identity that the two sides return to is, however, the identity which posits them as different. As Hegel states, the two sides are “in *einer* Identität verscheidene,” and therefore they do not fall together into a simple restful unity, but are drawn away from each other within their identity, the opposition.

As far as an opposition is considered according to how both of its sides are, as simply opposed, identical, the opposition is the *positive as such*. That which is opposed is, however, also unequal, and this inequality, which contains equality in the sense that it is essentially unequal to it, is the negative.⁵¹² The positive and the negative are in this way determinations that exist at a certain stage of their full dialectical movement. They are held fast at a particular stage where they are different, each exhibiting an essential exclusion of each other. Hegel expresses this holding fast of the movement of the determinations as their *Gesetzsein*; each determination contains a movement into its other, but in their positedness, this other is put outside of the determination. In this way the determinations are only equal to themselves and unequal to their other; when the positive and negative is understood like this they are “die selbständig gewordenen Seiten des Gegensatzes.”⁵¹³

These independent sides of the opposition are determined in two stages, where, firstly, there is an other, and, secondly, the other is not.⁵¹⁴ This is simply to say that in the opposition each side is fully dependent on the other – otherwise there would be no opposition at all – and that each side is only one side,

511 TWA 6:54=GW 11:272: “Im Gegensatze ist die *bestimmte Reflexion*, der Unterschied vollendet. Er ist die Einheit und der Verschiedenheit; seine Momente sind in *einer* Identität verschiedene; so sind sie *entgegengesetzte*.”

512 It is left out of consideration that the equal is itself unequal to the unequal and therefore equal to the unequal, and, furthermore, it is left out of consideration that which is unequal is equal to the equal since the equal is unequal to the unequal, and that the unequal is equal to the unequal and therefore unequal to itself.

513 TWA 6:57=GW 11:273.

514 TWA 6:57=GW 11:273.

not the other. It is irrelevant which side of the opposition is taken as positive and negative, and it can be shown that both sides – as positive or negative – must be just as positive as they are negative. First of all, each side is negative in relation to its other, and, secondly, each side must in any case also be positive; positive as that which it is outside of the relationship and negative as considered *in* the relationship of positive/negative, as the negation of *its* negative – the positive – and therefore itself positive.

8.3.3 *Contradiction: The Intensification of Opposition*

We have now arrived at Hegel's account of contradiction. I will first give a presentation of my interpretation of what contradiction means in Hegel's logic based on the above development of the determinations of reflection from identity into opposition, and then I will attempt to answer the specific questions regarding the nature of the determinate negation that were raised in relation to Hegel's use of the term in the introduction to *WdL*.

Contradiction – *as a determination of pure thinking* – arises from the relationship between the two sides of opposition, the positive and the negative: The very same respect in which the one includes the other is the very same respect in which it excludes it:

Indem die selbständige Reflexionsbestimmung in derselben Rücksicht, als sie die andere enthält und dadurch selbständig ist, die andere ausschließt, so schließt sie in ihrer Selbständigkeit ihre eigene Selbständigkeit aus sich aus, denn diese besteht darin, die ihr andere Bestimmung in sich zu enthalten und dadurch allein nicht Beziehung auf ein Äußerliches zu sein, – aber ebenso sehr unmittelbar darin, sie selbst zu sein und die ihr negative Bestimmung von sich auszuschließen. Sie ist so der *Widerspruch*.⁵¹⁵

When a determination includes its other in itself, it make the determination independent. Each side of the opposition is independent as far as it includes the other as a moment of itself and is itself the whole. For instance, the positive is the whole movement of being the negative of the negative, whereas the negative is used only against itself in order to determine the positive as such. Conversely, the negative itself is the negation of the positive and is therefore related to itself through being related to its other, which makes it positive. However, since each negates its other *as* other, they exclude the other that was supposed to be included. The inclusion of the other is necessary for the

⁵¹⁵ TWA 6:65=GW 11:279f. Cf. Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerpruchs*. Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010, p. 153.

independence of each side of the opposition, but each side of the opposition is also just a determination that excludes its opposite. Both sides, as far as they include the other, exclude the other *as* other, and therefore, *in the inclusion itself, exclude the inclusion of the other*. In other words, each side is essentially *not being the other*, each is the negative of the other (each is negative), while still supposed to have an independent determination (each is positive), meaning that both are simultaneously dependent on and independent of the other for its determination. This is now what the determination of opposition has become, the equal inclusion and exclusion of the other, resulting in that the opposition is “intensified” and becomes contradiction. Note that the opposing sides do not simply contradict each other but that each side both is and is not the other side.

The positive as a part of the opposition is a determination of its own. It excludes the negative – but this exclusion is equally the inclusion of the negative; not only is a reference to the negative unavoidable when defining what the positive is, the positive is what it is by being the negative of the negative. The same can be said of the negative. The negative excludes the positive insofar as it is a determination of its own within the opposition, but this exclusion is just as much an inclusion of the positive, since the negation of the positive, which is what the negative is, makes the negative into a determination of its own (similar to the determinate negation in the sense of coldness and darkness).

The positive that both includes and excludes the negative is contradictory. Therefore it is not what it was supposed to be, but rather the negation of itself or the negative as such. Furthermore, since the positive must exclude the negative, the excluded negative is equally excluding of the positive. This Hegel calls the absolute contradiction of the positive. First the positive becomes negative and therefore contradictory, and then it establishes the other as that which is actually excluding, free and self-identical. In other words, the positive establishes its other as that which it was itself supposed to be. The positive contradicts itself and gives rise to the other, intended negative, as the real positive.⁵¹⁶

516 TWA 6:65f.=GW 11:279f.: “Die beiden selbständigen Reflexionsbestimmungen für sich betrachtet, so ist das Positive das *Gesetztsein* als *in die Gleichheit mit sich* reflektiert, das *Gesetztsein*, das nicht Beziehung auf ein Anderes ist, das Bestehen also, insofern das *Gesetztsein aufgehoben* und *ausgeschlossen* ist. Damit aber macht sich das Positive zur *Beziehung eines Nichtseins*, – zu einem *Gesetztsein*. – So ist es der Widerspruch, daß es als das Setzen der Identität mit sich durch *Ausschließen* des Negativen sich selbst zum *Negativen* von einem macht, also zu dem Anderen, das es von sich ausschließt. Dieses ist als *Ausgeschlossenes* frei von dem *Ausschließenden* gesetzt; hiermit als in sich reflektiert und selbst ausschließend. So ist die ausschließende Reflexion Setzen des Positiven als ausschließend das Andere, so daß dies Setzen unmittelbar das Setzen seines Anderen, es

The negative is the positive that the positive was supposed to be. However, the negative exhibits the same absolute contradiction when we take the negative on its own. When we start with the negative, it is itself a positive immediate and not negation as such, since the negative is always the negative of something. The real negation of negation taken as immediate is the positive. In this way the absolute contradiction is repeated on the side of the negative. This contradiction is, however, only revealed when the negative is considered on its own. It is only the implicit movement of the positive into a contradiction that is repeated. The negative is itself the showing forth of this contradiction, the positive having become negative. The positive as the posited absolute contradiction is the negative in the sense of that which is different or unequal to itself. As this negative it is something that excludes being self-identical, equal and non-different. In this exclusion, however, the negative establishes itself as that which is different to the identical, and therefore identical to the different, i.e. to itself. The negative now, through excluding the identical, itself becomes identical and therefore excludes itself from itself.

To sum up the movement from opposition to contradiction: In the determination of opposition the positive and the negative are subordinate moments. Sine the positive and the negative both exclude and include each other in the same respect, the determination of opposition is destabilized and becomes contradiction itself.

8.3.4 *The Resolution of Contradiction: Into Nothing or Zero?*

Traditionally a contradiction resolves into nothing, into something inconceivable or non-existent. For Hegel, the contradictions inherent in pure thinking resolve or dissolve into something definite. The absolute contradiction that arises is, however, also resolved. At this point in the logic, Hegel considers the meaning of *Null* or zero as a resolution of the contradiction. It is the “first unity” that is established by the contradiction inherent in the opposites insofar as they are the “rastlose Verschwinden [...] in ihnen selbst.”⁵¹⁷ Contradiction can be understood as the dissolution of the determinations that does not leave anything to hold on to in thinking; neither an old determination, nor a new one. This is, however, as Hegel points out, still a unity.

One sense of zero is that of neutrality or of being neither negative nor positive. In a sense, it is that which is between the negative and positive, a limit

Ausschließenden ist. Dies ist der absolute Widerspruch des Positiven, aber er ist unmittelbar der absolute Widerspruch des Negativen; das Setzen beider ist eine Reflexion.”

517 TWA 6:67=GW 11:280.

between them. In this sense it can be seen as the attempt at introducing a determination that is not susceptible to the dialectics of the positive and negative. Or, more generally, an attempt at introducing something that is not susceptible to the objection that the thought of nothing, or of something contradictory, is still a thought of *something*. The zero is neither negative nor positive, and therefore could be seen to allow a state between a negative and positive existence, being neither the one nor the other.

When conceived as a limit, the zero could be met with a dialectical critique based on the movement of the determination of limit. Such a critique would show that the determination of limit does not yield the neutrality of a neither-nor. Another sense of zero is that of being left with nothing. The resolution of a contradiction into zero would then imply that there is nothing that could be taken up and brought further. An endpoint is reached. That the zero is a unity could, furthermore, simply be taken to mean that every contradiction resolves itself into this very same zero that leaves nothing. However, if we remember the meaning of the determinate negation in the context of the method as the “dissolution of the determinate matter,” then we see another sense of the resolution that does not leave nothing. The matter as determinate dissolves, but the elements remain, and can enter into new constellations. Being resolved into zero then does not mean that all is lost, only that something is lost. And the resolution of contradiction *is* the resolution into zero, just *not only* into zero.⁵¹⁸

In fact, when speaking of the zero, Hegel has something very precise in mind. On the one hand, in relation to mathematics, zero is the resolution of two opposed quantities into a determination, i.e. zero, which *is* determination, and therefore positively something, but also contains nothing, and is therefore negative.⁵¹⁹ Considered in relation to the determinations of pure thought in general it is equal to the logical substrate of reflection or the negative unity, which contains opposed determinations in it but is itself not determined positively as either this or that determination that it contains.⁵²⁰ A contradiction *can* be resolved into zero, but then it is either a “neutralization” of opposed determinations that does not have a result, or it is in a liminal state before a new determination enters, a liminal state that contains the opposites within a new determination.

⁵¹⁸ TWA 6:67=GW 11:280f.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerspruchs*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010, p. 156.

⁵²⁰ Cf. Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerspruchs*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010, p. 163.

This brings us to the notion of the resolution of contradiction into something, i.e. not zero. That which *goes under* (*zugrunde geht*) in contradiction – as Hegel says, that which *truly* goes under – is “das *Gesetzsein* der Selbständigkeit,” which, at least in relation to opposition, is the positive and the negative.⁵²¹ I take *Gesetzsein* or “positedness” to mean the definiteness of the determination. “Definiteness” in the sense of being non-contradictory and clearly defined, of rejecting that opposites belong to each other. In its positedness the positive is that which is the opposite of the negative, while what is left out of consideration is that it is itself the negative of the negative. Statements such as “the positive is the *opposite* of the negative,” “the positive *is not* the negative” and “the positive *is the negative* of the negative” express positedness insofar as the negative is simply a moment of the positive that accounts for the independence of the positive. The fact that the independence is accounted for through the essential relating of the positive to the negative is not reflected upon but rather taken as that which makes the positive independent. The positive sets the negative *as negative* out of itself, and it is not realized that this rejection makes the positive also set itself outside of itself, since it is then no longer just positive but dependent on the exclusion of the negative or has this negative nature as a side of itself that is not just a moment but rather its essence.

That which goes under when the contradictory nature of such determinations shows forth is the positedness, the separation of the determinations. What is left is then not simply zero but rather their connection or inherent relation. Hegel takes this to mean that the determinations, as opposites, not only go under, but in going under reach that which “lies beneath” them. This is the *ground* of the opposition. The ground explains why the separateness dissolves and is the result of the dissolution that is not nothing. Considered as part of an opposition the positive and the negative only have their positedness in themselves. As far as the opposition begins to realize itself in the dialectical consideration, each side of the opposition moves towards its positedness by including and excluding the other, but this movement is also the dissolution of the positedness; as we have seen, each side of the opposition becomes other to itself.

The way in which the independent determinations move into their ground by going under can be understood to mean that when the positive becomes negative, it moves into its ground. The negative is, in this sense, really that which makes the positive into something positive. The positive has the negative implicitly in it as that which makes it into the positive, and because the

521 TWA 6:67=GW 11:281.

positive contradicts itself this ground arises.⁵²² The independency that each side of the opposition sought is realized when the contradiction is resolved, i.e. when the unity of the positive and negative becomes actual. The ground is negative in relation to that which it is a ground of, but this negative is nothing more than the negative that makes that which the negative is the ground of into something positive. The ground has in itself to bring forth an other and therefore to dissolve. In other words, it has in itself to become the negative of itself, to negate itself, and pass over into that which it is the ground of, that which would be nothing without the ground.

8.4 Problems of Contradiction in Hegel's Philosophy

In the following I discuss two problems that relate to the notion of contradiction in Hegel's philosophy. The first concerns the difference between contradiction as it is usually understood and the way Hegel uses it within his logic and philosophy in general. How can any definite philosophical insight be conveyed if the process of knowledge as Hegel conceives it does not adhere to the law of non-contradiction? The contradictions of pure thinking are not merely due to appearances, and therefore cannot be resolved in a Kantian manner by introducing a dual-aspect understanding of reality. The determinate negation comes in where contradiction occurs as a "real event" in thinking, not as a subjective confusion. If a sufficient answer cannot be given to how contradictions express a necessary conflict of thinking with itself, and if it cannot be justified that this conflict does not annihilate the process of rational knowledge, then one might as well throw Hegel's conception of the determinate negation overboard.

The second problem relates to the third remark Hegel makes about the determination of contradiction in the doctrine of essence. In this remark Hegel seems to claim that contradictions will keep on recurring within the process of philosophical knowledge, which would imply that there is no final resolution of contradiction. We have encountered this problem before by reflecting on a plausible consequence of the continuing recurrence of contradiction in the logic of being. Now we will look into Hegel's own reflections in this issue. This issue is important especially in order to clarify the concept of the speculative (inclusive) conceptions of the determinate negation and their relation to the other exclusive conceptions. As I have pointed out, the main problem is that all

522 Cf. TWA 6:69=GW 11:282.

inclusive determinate negations (all speculative unities) themselves exclude the non-unity of united determinations.

8.4.1 *What exactly is Contradiction in Hegel's Philosophy?*

Hegel's use of the terms "negation," "determination" and "contradiction" breaks with tradition.⁵²³ A contradiction, for Hegel, is not a relation between two judgments where one judgment affirms what the other denies, resulting in nothing. As long as this understanding of contradiction is not clearly differentiated from the one Hegel develops in his logic, any critique of Hegel based on the traditional understanding will be superficial.⁵²⁴ Hegel does not, however, make this differentiation easy when he expresses his view of contradiction in terms that are used to define contradiction in the traditional way. For example, he speaks of contradiction in terms of how "the independent determinations of reflection" both mutually exclude and include each other *in the same respect* (*Beziehung*).⁵²⁵ This last qualifier is a clear reference to Aristotle's definition of contradiction, and Hegel seems intent on blocking the possibility of an interpretation that allows for the common resolution of contradiction by having one of the contradictory judgments refer to another sense of the predicate than that of the seemingly contradictory judgment. Similarly, it can be confusing when Hegel claims that the sentence "Alle Dinge sind an sich selbst widerprechend" expresses "das Wesen der Dinge,"⁵²⁶ since he is, in the logic, not speaking about things at all (although he treats the determination of "thing" as one among other determinations of pure thinking). What we can rule out,

523 For a survey of the different positions on Hegel's doctrine of contradiction in relation to the dialectical method see Sarlemijn, Andries: *Hegel's Dialectic*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1975, pp. 69–81.

524 E.g. Trendelenburg (Trendelenburg, A.: *Logische Untersuchungen*. Vol. 1, Leipzig: Hirzel, 1870, pp. 36–129) and Popper (Popper, Karl Raimond: "Was ist Dialektik?" in: E. Topitsch, (ed.), *Logik der Sozialwissenschaften*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1965, pp. 262–290. A substantial critique of Hegel based on a claim that he rejects the principle of non-contradiction can be found in Düsing, Klaus: *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1996, pp. 96–99. Fulda points out that contradiction can only concern an interpreted language (Fulda, Hans Friedrich: "Unzulängliche Bemerkungen zur Dialektik," in: Rolf Peter Horstmann (ed.), *Seminar: Dialektik in Hegels Philosophie*, p. 64). I agree to the extent that I believe that any successful account of Hegel's doctrine of contradiction must explain the relationship between the movement of pure thought and the expression of it in contradictory judgments. Still, it should be clear that a natural phenomenon such as movement (which for Hegel exhibits contradiction) is contradictory in a purely logical way independently of being conceived within an interpreted language.

525 TWA 6:65=GW 11:280.

526 TWA 6:74=GW 11:286.

however, is that Hegel is attempting to find a way – like Kant did with his conception of real opposition – to understand how two opposite predicates can come together in the same subject without producing a contradiction. Again, contradiction for Hegel implies the mutual exclusion and inclusion of the determinations “positive” and “negative.” It is not a summation (cancellation) of a quantitative intensity in a subject.

The reason why Hegel does not accept the traditional definition of contradiction is that the form of the sentence (judgment) is not adequate when it comes to expressing the true, concrete, and the speculative; the form of the judgment is one-sided and as such is false.⁵²⁷ Truth can be expressed or revealed through sentences, but as truth is approached we arrive at a certain point in the development where the relationship between opposite determinations is such that it cannot be rendered in sentences of which one affirms what the other denies.

What may go unnoticed, is that Hegel offers an account of what contradiction *is*, i.e. what it means for something to be contradictory. The general idea of the law of non-contradiction is that of *incompatibility*. “Incompatibility” expresses a relation and therefore as far as we consider something as it is outside of all its relations then there is nothing that is contradictory. Contradiction appears only insofar as the candidates of the candidate-pair are related in a specific way, so as to make them “resist” each other or *impossible* to combine. This is the reason for the addition of qualifiers such as “at the same time,” “in the same respect,” “in the same relation,” or similar, to the formulation of the law of non-contradiction. To give a substantial account of what a contradiction is requires more than stating that the relationship between candidates (sentences, predicates, determinations, etc.) is such that when one is true or in some form present, the other is false or absent. What makes an account substantial is that it explains exactly *why* it is the case that when one of the candidates of the pair is true, the other must be false, and vice versa. The easiest way to make an account substantial is to rely on the intuited content of sense-perception and our ability to represent images to ourselves. In the case of *circle* and *square* I intuit why I cannot make a circle into a square without making the circle cease to be a circle. The underlying substantiality is simply that of intuited spatial relations. In *WdL* Hegel cannot rely on such substantiality simply because the focus is on the determinations of thinking in its purity.

In order to grasp what Hegel means by contradiction we will therefore have to focus on the content of pure thinking and not the form of sentence that

527 TWA 8:98=Enz. § 32.

expresses it. As has now been repeatedly pointed out, contradiction in Hegel – his account of what contradiction consists of – concerns the relationship of the positive and the negative, the two moments of opposition. The way the positive and negative include and exclude each other in the same way is what is meant by “contradiction” in Hegel.⁵²⁸ To grasp this, we have to keep two things in mind: First of all, the positive/negative becomes independent through excluding the other; the positive/negative is the negative of its other, which is what makes the positive/negative into something positive. Secondly, the way in which the positive/negative is positive is the same as that in which it is negative. One can also note that it is not of any real importance whether we choose to look at either the determination of the positive or of the negative, since they are in fact the same contradiction.⁵²⁹

When we describe a dialectical movement, we can always reflect on this and ask whether the sentences themselves follow the law of contradiction, i.e. whether we mean what we say and not something else. We would then be asking our question on the level of the understanding. The task of dialectics is to show that sentences often mean something else than we think that they do. But we could not get to this if we did not try to understand the meaning of a specific sentence as unambiguous and as meaning what we think it means. So if we ask whether Hegel follows the law of contradiction, the shortest and most “precise” answer will have to be: yes and no. The question seeks a unambiguous answer, but in order to be true to the processuality of dialectical thinking, there can be no clear-cut answer. However, since “there can be no clear-cut answer” is itself clear-cut, it denies itself. This, however, can be taken to indicate that the form of the sentence is inadequate when it comes to expressing speculative truths; it is unproductively self-negating – it does not lead to a speculative unification. The self-dissolution of such sentences is the negative aspect of the process of philosophical knowledge. Any specific statement is at most partially true; true insofar as it takes part in the becoming of truth; untrue insofar as it undergoes a dialectical reversal.

8.4.2 *Objective Contradiction, Negative Unity and the Reappearance of the Bad Infinite*

In the third remark on the determination of contradiction in *WdL*, Hegel makes some of the most problematic/revealing statements about his conception of contradiction, but also gives some further important reflections about their resolution. Contradiction was already present in the determination of identity,

⁵²⁸ TWA 6:65=GW 11:280.

⁵²⁹ TWA 6:66=GW 11:280.

in that it is supposed to state something while actually stating nothing; it was also present in difference, as the determination that is the unity of two things that are *different* and in this very same relation is the same and therefore not different;⁵³⁰ with the determination of *opposition* and especially its moments of positive and negative, this implicit contradiction appears as contradiction as such, i.e. as a determination of its own. Hegel underlines the importance of contradiction in his program for *WdL*, and calls it a fundamental prejudice of previous methods of logic that identity is somehow a determination that is more important than contradiction. I believe that most thinkers, if they were to construct a system, would want it to be non-contradictory, somehow showing the identity of everything. Identity is still taken to be more important than contradiction; the former should be sought, the latter avoided. Hegel believes exactly the opposite, claiming “wenn von Rangordnung die Rede und beide Bestimmungen als getrennte festzuhalten wäre, so wäre der Widerspruch für das Tiefere und Wesenhaftere zu nehmen.”⁵³¹ But he goes further than this. The common opinion is that contradiction is something unthinkable or at least something that does not exist. Hegel does not in any way try to hide or downplay that his own view seems to be contrary to this. As he says: “Alle Dinge sind an sich selbst widersprechend.”⁵³²

We need to be careful when it comes to interpreting this statement. What Hegel actually says is that *if* the determinations of reflection that precede contradiction, i.e. identity, difference and opposition, are stated in one sentence that grasps them in the truth they pass over into, then it would be the sentence “all things are in themselves contradictory.” This sentence more appropriately expresses the truth – the realized movement of the determinations of reflection – than the other sentences that express these determinations, such as the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, etc. This could be taken to mean that Hegel is only speaking about the logical determinations themselves *in their dialectical exposition*. However, the matter is more complicated as Hegel adds that this sentence is to be taken to express “das Wesen der Dinge.”⁵³³ He seems committed to the view that logical determinations and the contradictions they exhibit concern not only the determinations themselves, but also things. Consequently, it is truer to say

530 Cf. TWA 6:65=GW 11:279: “Der Unterschied überhaupt ist schon der Widerspruch *an sich*; denn er ist die *Einheit* von solchen, die nur sind, insofern sie *nicht eins* sind, – und die *Trennung* solcher, die nur sind als *in derselben Beziehung* getrennte.”

531 TWA 6:75=GW 11:286.

532 TWA 6:74=GW 11:286.

533 TWA 6:74=GW 11:286.

that all things are contradictory than to say that “there are no things that are both A and not-A,” that “there are no things that are exactly identical,” or something similar.

Is Hegel then committed to the view that there are objective contradictions? It seems hard to avoid this conclusion. First of all, Hegel points out that:

Was nun die Behauptung betrifft, daß es den Widerspruch nicht *gebe*, daß es nicht ein Vorhandenes sei, so brauchen wir uns um eine solche Versicherung nicht zu kümmern; eine absolute Bestimmung des Wesens muß sich in aller Erfahrung finden, in allem Wirklichen wie in jedem Begriffe.⁵³⁴

Secondly, he points to the example of movement. Movement is real and contradictory, it is that which “*der daseiende Widerspruch sich selbst ist*.” Thirdly, he states that *drive* is that which is both something in itself as well the negative of itself, a lack, *in the same respect*.⁵³⁵ This should, however, not come as a surprise at this point, as we have already established that Hegel not only believes that contradictions are thinkable, but also that they exist. It is as if Hegel establishes two spheres of existence, one which is dead and another which is living. The living can enter the sphere of the dead, and when it does, it shows up as contradiction and movement. In fact, Hegel says that the living is only living “insofern es den Widerspruch in sich enthält, und zwar diese Kraft ist, den Widerspruch in sich zu fassen und auszuhalten.”⁵³⁶ Speculative thinking exhibits similar characteristics and does not need to resolve contradictions either into other determinations or into nothing.⁵³⁷ Because of this, one could call “speculative thinking” a form of “living thinking.” This is, however, a thinking that, as we have seen, also resolves contradiction, which Hegel now describes as resolution that not simply stays in the negative side of contradiction – the resolution into nothing – but equally moves into the positive side, making contradiction into “*absolute Tätigkeit*” and “*absoluter Grund*.”⁵³⁸

Just as we have determined that Hegel believes contradictions exist, we also learn that they are resolved. Hegel gives three examples of resolved contradictions: The thing, the subject and the concept, all of which are negative unities and, furthermore, the ground that the contradictory elements are resolved

534 TWA 6:75=GW 11:287.

535 TWA 6:76=GW 11:287.

536 TWA 6:76=GW 11:287.

537 TWA 6:76=GW 11:287.

538 TWA 6:78=GW 11:289.

into. The thing is in itself not a contradiction. It is an “empty container” of different determinations, which it unifies. This is what makes it a negative unity. The negative unity is that which supplies the different respects that are usually introduced in order to resolve contradictions, that which makes it possible for the same to consist of different determinations and still be the same. Still – Hegel admits – all of these negative unities are contradictory when considered from a higher sphere.⁵³⁹ Considered from a higher sphere, the negative unity is opposed to other unities and becomes positively determined. A thing is not another thing, a thing is not a subject, and so on. So in the higher sphere, the negative unities become finite and oppose/contradict each other. Now Hegel states that the higher sphere itself has a higher sphere as *its* negative unity and ground, within which the contradictions are again resolved. Here Hegel stops. He does not answer the question of whether the contradictions are resolved in a final negative unity, which is beyond any form of difference, beyond any opposition, or if all higher spheres have another higher sphere and so on ad infinitum.

The whole question of a final resolution of contradiction then rests on the clarification of the concept of negative unity as well as whether there is some sense in which a negative unity can be said to be something that has no higher sphere in which it is “eine *bestimmte, verschiedene*; [...] eine *endliche*,” which means “eine *widersprechende*.”⁵⁴⁰ It seems obvious, however, that the negative unity, as *negative*, is, as opposed to the positive, contradictory. Why he leaves this out here is puzzling. An answer may be that he does believe there is a negative that is not also a positive, which would mean that at this point he rejects his logical insight into the relationship between the positive and the negative. Another answer may be that if he were to go on and state that every higher negative unity corresponds to a positive unity that it is in contradiction with – which again forces it into its ground, a new negative unity, thereby implying that this process is repeated indefinitely – then he would be caught in a bad infinite. If he were then to let this be a bad infinite that does not become an affirmative infinite, this would mean he rejects one of his most fundamental logical insights. However, it is perhaps more likely that Hegel does not comment further on this because we are still in the logic of essence. Not until the logic of the concept is the infinite processuality presented as an affirmative infinite (in the form of the method). This is therefore an issue that we will return to.

For now it can be noted that the idea of a negative unity may be exactly the sense in which one finds speculation for instance in Aristotle. The negative

539 TWA 6:79=GW 11:289.

540 TWA 6:79=GW 11:289.

unity is the speculative unity insofar as it is conceived of without its inherent movement exhibited as movement. It is the speculative conceived in a mode of rest. This is, however, a one-sided conception of it; the speculative is accounted for fully only insofar as it is also grasped as absolute activity.

Hegel also seems to contradict himself – in a non-dialectical way – in his presentation of the relationship between the finite and the absolute. Traditionally it is said that the absolute is because the finite is; the finite rests upon the absolute ground, for instance in the way contingent beings in the end all rest on some necessary being. However, Hegel claims the reason why the absolute is, is because the finite *is not*.⁵⁴¹ The finite contradicts itself and therefore is not, but rather goes under and returns to its ground, the absolute. Although Hegel does not explicitly state that the finite is non-existent because it is contradictory, this seems to be the point on which the argument rests. But Hegel has also stated that there are indeed contradictions that exist. These, however, have to exhibit some form of life, real opposition or movement. This is what it means to be an existing contradiction. The resolution of the apparent non-dialectical contradiction is that the finite goes under not only because it is a contradiction – this may be a necessary but not sufficient condition for its going under – but because it is not living:

Wenn aber ein Existierendes nicht in seiner positiven Bestimmung zugleich über seine negative überzugreifen und eine in der anderen festzuhalten, den Widerspruch nicht in ihm selbst zu haben vermag, so ist es nicht die lebendige Einheit selbst, nicht Grund, sondern geht in dem Widerspruch zugrunde.⁵⁴²

We can sum this up in the following way: The finite both is and is not. It is a contradiction that exists, but it is also something that does not exist, and because it does not, the absolute is. In fact, however, Hegel thinks of the finite as not really separate from the infinite (the absolute). It is the process of becoming of the infinite. Taken as a separate existence the finite is a contradiction, because it is both something as well as the process of passing over into its other and establishing an infinite relation (a whole). Hence the non-dialectical contradiction dissolves when we look into the underlying dialectics of the matter at hand. This can probably be taken as a general principle when interpreting Hegel's texts.

541 TWA 6:80=GW 11:290.

542 TWA 6:76=GW 11:287.

We will return to a discussion of the meaning and implications of contradiction when treating the dialectical method as it is presented at the end of *WdL*.

8.5 The Logic of Essence and the Speculative Determinate Negation

At this point I will return to two of the questions that were raised in relation to the determinate negation as part of the dialectical method, namely the question of how something negative can be something positive and what the meaning of the self-contradictory is as abstract or concrete negation (see 6.3).

8.5.1 *How Can Something Negative be Positive?*

In his first remark on the determination of contradiction in *WdL*, Hegel concentrates on the issue of how the positive and negative are related to each other. In his presentation of the speculative determinate negation, Hegel claimed that only “a simple insight” is required in order to realize that the negative is just as much positive. At that point he does not let us know what kind of insight this is; whether it is a speculative one, a dialectical one, or even whether it is one that the understanding can grasp. In the remark on contradiction Hegel claims, interestingly, that even for *external reflection*, it is easy to grasp that the positive and the negative are themselves both positive and negative:

Es ist aber, auch für die äußere Reflexion, eine einfache Betrachtung, daß fürs erste das Positive nicht ein unmittelbar Identisches ist, sondern teils ein Entgegengesetztes gegen das negative, und daß es nur in dieser Beziehung Bedeutung hat, also das Negative selbst *in seinem Begriffe* liegt, teils aber, daß es an ihm selbst die sich auf sich beziehende Negation des bloßen Gesetzseins oder des Negativen, also selbst die *absolute Negation* in sich ist – Ebenso das Negative, das dem Positiven gegenübersteht, hat nur Sinn in dieser Beziehung auf dies sein Anderes; es enthält also dasselbe *in seinem Begriffe*. Das Negative hat aber auch ohne Beziehung auf das Positive ein *eigenes Bestehen*; es ist mit sich identisch; so ist es aber selbst das, was das Positive sein sollte.⁵⁴³

Here Hegel sums up the dialectic of the positive and the negative, and clearly states how the negative is positive: The negative is positive since the negative subsists on its own; the negative is self-identical in a way in which the positive was supposed to be, but, due to the dialectic of the positive, turned out not to

543 TWA 6:71=GW 11:283.

be. When the negative is defined simply as that which is not positive, something that is not supposed to be something on its own but only the absence of the positive, it undergoes a dialectical reversal and becomes exactly something that is independent and self-identical. The negative is therefore what the positive was supposed to be. We have already encountered this point in relation to the absolute contradiction of the positive above. The positive excludes the negative and through this the negative just as much excludes the positive; the positive can only *be* as far as the negative is something more over against the positive than a simple negation of it. Only insofar as the negative is something more than the positive, something having a positivity of its own, which excludes the original positive, can the positive be and remain positive. Furthermore, when it is said that the negative is the negative of the positive, this is different from saying that the positive is the negative of the negative. In the former case it is said that the negative is what it is or that it is self-identical, while in the latter it is said that the positive is also negative. The negative is something that can subsist both in itself and in an other and is in this way something absolute, something independent. Again, the negative is that which the positive was supposed to be.

External reflection does not see it as problematic that the positive and negative turn into each other because it takes itself to fulfill a reflection that is *only* external and therefore can be ascribed to either mere appearance or some subjective shortcoming that results in a confusion about the way we think about these determinations. The confusion that arises from the apparent similarity of dissimilar determinations is, Hegel admits, simply a confusion *so long as the consciousness of the necessity of the transformation of the positive and the negative into each other is not present*.⁵⁴⁴ An external reflection that sees similarities between the positive and the negative is closer to the truth than it realizes. So far as the intrinsically mutual relationship between the positive and the negative is seen as expressing the movement of pure thinking, i.e. of what something is in itself and in its whole development, then the insight that the negative is just as much positive is an insight of reason (which encompasses the speculative and dialectical).

With regards to the speculative determinate negation, I believe that the way in which it is a negative that is a positive has to be considered in light of the whole movement of thinking that begins with an immediate positive and then undergoes a dialectical reversal before it enters into a speculative unity. It is therefore not a matter of the negative also being positive in that it is itself something outside of the relationship to the positive. Rather it is a matter of

544 TWA 6:71=GW 11:283.

negativity being that which the positive was supposed to be. When an initial immediate positive determination undergoes dialectical change and itself becomes negative, when the negative realizes that which the first immediate positive determination was supposed to be, then the negative becomes representative of the independency of an absolute whole that lies both beyond and at the ground of the dialectical reversal. The dialectically developed negativity is therefore nothing other than the whole itself, and the “real positive,” the “mediated immediate” that is expressed as a speculative unity that contains the negative movement in itself as its own “logical life” or the process of its own self-development. The structure of this development will be the topic of the next chapter on the doctrine of concept in Hegel’s logic.

8.5.2 *On the Resolution of Contradiction into Abstract or Concrete Negation*

We can now return to the second main issue relating to the speculative negation. Let me repeat the question: What is the meaning of negation/the self-contradictory as (2a) an abstract negation that resolves into (i) “Null” or (ii) all negation, and (2b) as a concrete negation that resolves into a (i) negation of the particular content of the self-contradictory, and (ii) a negation of the determinate matter that therefore is a determinate negation?

Because of the immanent procedure of the development of the determinations of pure thinking it is correct to say that these determinations contradict themselves, rather than that they contradict each other.⁵⁴⁵ In a process of dialectical determination a preliminary determination becomes other to itself and therefore contradicts itself. We can state more precisely what this contradiction consists of at this point. One of the main points of Hegel’s logic is to show how all determinations enter into relationships where they mutually contain and define each other. Any determination that implies some self-subsistent immediacy, such as being or *Dasein*, turns into a determination that is opposed to itself. As Hegel shows in the doctrine of essence, opposition turns into contradiction. Because all determinations exhibit a movement of reflection, moving from identity to difference and opposition, they will turn out to be contradictory. In other words, since all determinations involve determinations of reflection, they will exclude something in the same respect as they include it.⁵⁴⁶

545 Cf. de Boer, Karin: “Hegel’s Account of Contradiction in the Science of Logic Reconsidered.” in: *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 48, Nr. 3, 2010, pp. 345–373.

546 Another way to understand what contradiction in Hegel really means is to say that when *opposed* determinations turn out to be *the same* the result is a contradiction (what is said

The self-contradictory, i.e. the dialectically developed opposition, is conceived as an abstract negation either when it resolves into zero, when it resolves into a negative unity, or when it resolves into “all negation.” 2ai is contrastive to 2bii, which means that the resolution of the contradiction does not result in a stable negative unity (or abstract nothing), but only negates the “particular content” of the determinations. I take “particular content” to mean the intended self-subsistence of the sides of an opposition that was supposed to give them a definite character of their own.

That Hegel differentiates the concrete, i.e. speculative, negation from abstract negation, seems to have two functions. Firstly, it announces that Hegel does not accept the traditional view that contradictions result in nothing. Secondly, it seems to be a way of distinguishing the concrete negation resulting from contradiction from real opposition; if the contradictions that arise in pure thinking come as a result of oppositions that are properly interpreted as real oppositions, then it would also be correct to say that we are not dealing with contradictions, but opposite determinations that, when they meet in the same subject, result in neutrality.

The term “all negation” of 2bi probably refers to the limitless reality of traditional metaphysics that results when all negations that give determinateness to reality are abstracted from it.⁵⁴⁷ Traditionally, such a conception of reality was a way of allowing for a final resolution of any apparently contradictory relationships between finite entities; however, in Hegel's interpretation, such a resolution only made the “real reality” that remained into an abstract, indeterminate nothing. 2bi is contrastive to 2bii, the negation of the determinate matter (*Sache*), which is to say that the self-contradictory does not go so far as to resolve into the infinite reality, but only resolves that which previously gave definiteness to the matter; a matter which now undergoes a transformation into the new, speculative, determinate negation.

of them is denied of them, i.e. as opposed they are different, but in the process of dialectical-speculative determination they become identical). See Wandschneider, Dieter: *Das Problem der Dialektik*, Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1997, p. 125ff. The differences between this conception of contradiction and the conception that focuses on inclusion and exclusion seems, however, to lie mainly in that, in the former instance, a conventional definition of contradiction is presupposed, while in the latter that which accounts for what a contradiction is as such the relation of inclusion and exclusion of the positive and the negative.

547 Cf. TWA 5:119.s.

8.6 Summary

In our treatment of the doctrine of essence we encountered Hegel's last reference to the determinate negation. Hegel described essence as such as a negation, a negation that, since it includes being in it, is determinate. Essence is, as a determinate negation, a negation that *includes its opposite in it but is still determined in opposition to that which it includes*. This is therefore a form of the determinate negation that is both exclusive and inclusive, though exclusive and inclusive in a different way than the determinate negations we have previously treated (with the possible exception of the determinate negation in the form of body/*Gestalt* (4.2.4)). I will return to an account of all the different forms of the determinate negation and the relation between them in 10.1.

I have now presented Hegel's doctrine of contradiction, which is particularly important when it comes to clarifying how the speculative determinate negation arises from the dialectics of identity and difference, which becomes opposition, and then "intensifies" into contradiction. Hegel's suggestion is that contradiction is properly understood on the level of pure thinking as the relationship between the negative and the positive, where both include and exclude each other in the same way. Since Hegel's conception of determination as a process implies that any definite statement will become untruthful on closer analysis it is not possible to use the traditional law of non-contradiction as a universal measure of truth. This, however, leads to the question of whether this processual way of understanding philosophical knowledge really is representative of bad infinity or not; do contradictions always keep recurring or is there some stage in the process where a final resolution occurs. We left this question open, since we have yet to investigate Hegel's concept of the absolute idea, which is a successor to the notion of a highest being or reality in which all contradictions are resolved.

The investigation of the determinations of reflection also made it possible to address two of the main issues relating to the speculative determinate negation, namely how something negative can be positive, and how the resolution of the (self-)contradictory leads to a concrete negation. That something negative can be positive is connected to Hegel's treatment of the determination of opposition, the moments of which are exactly the positive and the negative. The dialectics of the positive is such that it moves into a relation of dependency on the negative, since it is itself negative of the negative. Thereby the positive is no longer positive in the sense of something immediate and self-subsistent. The negative is also negative of the positive, but this consolidates negation; the negative gives subsistence to its opposite and therefore also gives

subsistence to itself. In this way the negative is positive, or the whole of the relationship of opposition. I suggested that the speculative determinate negation comes in as an answer to the movement of dissolution of the initial determination because of the realization that the negative is positive in this way. The negative does not simply bring about a dissolution of the determinations of thinking, it also establishes them. Because of this the negative has the "hidden" speculative significance of constituting the whole relationship of opposition; speculative thinking expresses this negativity in positive terms based on the realization of the insight that the negative also has a deeper positive significance, or is indeed what is actually positive in comparison to the initial positivity.

The issue of the resolution of the contradictory into a concrete and not an abstract negation concerned the traditional view of contradiction. On a traditional account contradiction either dissolves into a nothingness or all negation. Saying that contradiction results in *Null*, zero, means that the "meeting" of two opposed determinations results in an indeterminate nothingness. Since Hegel rejects this interpretation of the meeting of determinations, he makes it impossible to interpret the contradictions of pure thinking as real oppositions. Since he also rejects the notion that contradictions can resolve into "all negation," he rejects the old metaphysical notion that contradictions are simply illusory when the whole of reality is taken into account. For Hegel, contradictions are real in the sense that they express the inner conflict of thinking with itself, a conflict which he also thinks is inherent in all life.

Determination and Negation in the Doctrine of the Concept

So far, we have shed light on the different aspects of the determinate negation as a methodical concept introduced as a part of the program of *WdL*, and also identified different forms of the determinate negation. What remains, is to give a comprehensive overview of the different forms of the determinate negation and to give an account of Hegel's dialectical method as such. This will complete the picture of how Hegel seeks to reformulate what philosophical knowledge is about. Additionally, we have to address some open questions concerning speculative determinate negation. These relate mainly to Hegel's claim that the speculative determinate negation is "a higher and richer concept" than the determinations from which it arises. As we will see, Hegel's claim is in a sense a provocation. According to traditional logic, higher concepts are always poorer in content than the lower ones. If this were not the case, the higher concepts would be contradictory. Armed with his new understanding of opposition and contradiction Hegel challenges this doctrine. In order to show in detail what Hegel's provocation consists of, I will address Hegel's revision of the traditional doctrine of the concept. I will mainly rely on the traditional doctrine of the concept as presented by Kant.

This will, furthermore, allow us to return to some of the issues that were raised earlier with regards to the background of Hegel's conception of the determinate negation. At the end of the doctrine of the concept, Hegel gives an exposition of the dialectical method, which we will consider in some detail, in particular how the determinate negation plays a part within it. After this, I present a comprehensive conception of the determinate negation as it has emerged throughout this study, and try to give a final word on unresolved issues, such as the notion of a final resolution of contradiction in the process of knowledge through reason.

9.1 Hegel's Doctrine of the Concept

For Hegel, the *concept* of being is that which reveals being as one with its other, the way in which being is becoming.⁵⁴⁸ Within the doctrine of being

548 TWA 6:275=GW 12:33: "Das *Sein* ist einfaches, als *unmittelbares*; deswegen ist es ein nur *Gemeintes* und kann man von ihm nicht sagen, was es ist; es ist daher unmittelbare eins

there is no insight into the structure of movement that pure thinking undergoes. Through the doctrine of essence, the interrelatedness of all determinations of pure thinking gradually becomes clear before it is fully uncovered in the doctrine of the concept. Even though Hegel's doctrine of the concept implies a break with tradition, he sometimes makes use of comparisons with the traditional doctrine.⁵⁴⁹ Such characteristics can be helpful, but also misleading, since Hegel understands concepts differently than in the tradition. Hegel does not, for instance, talk about a higher concept as containing different marks or predicates that can be found in all lower concepts. For him, as far as we can make use of the traditional framework as a contrast, lower concepts are not subordinate to higher ones, but rather contained in them. According to the traditional doctrine, this would lead to a contradiction, since one mark or predicate belongs to one species but not the other. If two species were understood to be contained in a higher concept, the higher concept would both contain and not contain the differentiating marker. This is an issue that we will go into when giving an account of the intuitive understanding that is exemplified by the logic of the concept. For now I will focus on Hegel's account of the concept on his own terms, i.e. according the dialectical development of the determinations of pure thinking.

The transition from essence to the concept happens by identifying three different totalities within the sphere of essence, each of which exhibits either universality, singularity or particularity. However, all of which are:

[...] eine und dieselbe Reflexion, welches als *negative Beziehung auf sich* in jene beiden sich unterscheidet, aber als in einen *vollkommen durchsichtigen Unterschied*, nämlich in die *bestimmte Einfachheit* oder in die *enfache Bestimmtheit*, welche ihr eine und dieselbe Identität ist.⁵⁵⁰

The determinations of essence are lacking in that the relationships between the opposed pairs of determinations are not grasped as *one*; the moments only pass over into each other in the way that one moment is one whole that contains the other in it. When both are understood through the concept – *their* concept – each moment is equally *the whole*, which means that any moment that is considered brings with it the others in a way that does not prioritize one over the other. The universal does not have priority over the singular like the

mit seinem Anderen, dem *Nichtsein*. Eben dies ist sein Begriff, ein solches Einfaches zu sein, das in seinem Gegenteil unmittelbar verschwindet; er ist das *Werden*."

549 TWA 6:292=GW 12:45f.

550 TWA 6:240=GW 11:409.

determination “essential” implies a priority over “inessential.” The typical movement of the determinations within the doctrine of essence is that one determination is at first taken as the one with priority over the other, and then is made relative to the other in such a way as to make the other exhibit that which was initially thought to belong to the determination that has priority. The inessential is itself essential for essentiality. Without it, the essential would not be essential. Similarly, difference is itself essential for identity; it is constitutive of it – identity is *different* from identity, which makes difference into that which can subsist in otherness, that which remains identical even as a part of its other.

While the unities that appeared in the doctrine of being imply a reduction of the determination to moments *within* the whole, which itself has priority over the moments, this is not the case in the doctrine of essence. For example, existence and appearance pass over into a relation of mutual determination (called “Das wesentliche Verhältnis”). It is realized that the determinations of essence that stand in a relationship of priority are nothing outside of this relationship, which means that both of the related determinations are equal. The determination of the concept as a whole consisting of a universal, particular and singular moment, continues and transforms these three aspects of the determinations of essence: Firstly, the determination that is considered “essential” is reflected out of itself into its other, secondly, the other again reflects what the original determination was supposed to be, and then, thirdly, the whole of this relationship of mutual determination is revealed, wherein each part is equally the whole itself.

One of the most important ideas inherent in the transition from essence to the concept is the idea of the transition from necessity into freedom. Understanding what this transition consists of is a matter of recognizing that something necessary can also express freedom. The necessity expressed when something subjects an other to itself can also be recognized to express the freedom of the other insofar as the other is seen to have its real essence in this necessity, which only *appears* as an external determining factor, while it really – when conceptually grasped – it is part of a process of self-determination. This is now the realization of the general notion of determination as having the other as an essential part of itself. The other that is initially excluded becomes part of a comprehensive or overarching process of self-determination. When this movement is grasped as a whole, the structure of the concept is present.

From the content of the doctrine of the concept it is clear that Hegel makes use of an already established convention. *Prima facie*, the forms of judgment and the forms of inference do not differ from the ones Kant presents. Hegel notes this himself, but adds that his intention is to make these finished, fixed,

and hardened forms flow, to “set them on fire,” bringing forth their dialectical movement.⁵⁵¹ In contrast to the doctrine of being and essence, it could seem that what Hegel is aiming at here is more the connection between these established forms rather than constructing the forms and showing what their connection consists of.

The concept is itself a speculative determinate negation in that it is a result that contains its predecessors, being and essence, in itself, and is their unity.⁵⁵² As this unity, however, the concept is the fully developed structure that was inherent in its predecessors. As the concept becomes idea and method, it has its own structure as its object; there is an awareness of the whole movement that makes out the unity of being and essence. Furthermore, one is no longer bound to the dialectical movement. Rather, the concept is the movement that has returned to itself and has become aware of itself, so as to be able to make explicit what it is as a form or as a method.

One can say that although the concept is the last in the order of appearance, it is the first in the order of explanation. It explains not only what happened to the determinations of being and essence, but also explains itself. When the concept presents itself, it constitutes itself as the “mediated immediate,” as that which has arisen through that which it contains. Furthermore, it is the only fully transparent presence of the essence of the material; it is the consciousness of the method within the absolute idea. When it first presents itself, the concept is that which has its predecessors as its presupposition. Then it turns out to be *their* presupposition. The reason for this is that the structure of priority between “the presupposing” and “the presupposed” is a structure of reciprocity that is only fully and consistently explained by the concept that resolves the contradiction inherent in any structure of reciprocity, namely that both elements are equally passive and active.

The concept as such is differentiated into universal, singular and particular. This signals a break with Kant, since for Kant concepts are mainly universal. Calling a concept “particular” means it is being used as a species of a universal; one is saying something about the hierarchical ordering of concepts. Calling a

551 TWA 6:243=GW 12:5.

552 In fact, the concept seems to fulfill many of the characteristics of the speculative determinate negation. See TWA 6:245=GW 12:11: “Der Begriff ist von dieser Seite zunächst überhaupt als das *Dritte* zum *Sein* und *Wesen*, zum *Unmittelbaren* und zur *Reflexion* anzusehen. *Sein* und *Wesen* sind insofern die Momente seines *Werdens*; er aber ist ihre *Grundlage* und *Wahrheit* als die Identität, in welcher sie untergegangen und enthalten sind. Sie sind in ihm, weil er ihr *Resultat* ist, enthalten, aber nicht mehr als *Sein* und als *Wesen*; diese Bestimmung haben sie nur, insofern sie noch nicht in diese ihre Einheit zurückgegangen sind.”

concept “singular” is for Kant not meaningful, since only intuitions are singular representations. For Hegel, however, the differentiation of the concept into universal, particular and singular can be understood through the relationship these determinations have to the other determinations of the logic. First of all, a concept of the concept is *universal*; it is the nature of or what is common to all concepts. Secondly, the concept of the concept is particular in that it is one concept among many, having a specific nature that differentiates it from others.⁵⁵³ Finally, the concept of the concept is *singular*; no other determination in the logic is the concept of the concept (there is only one concept of the concept), and this concept is the realization of all other determinations of the logic, which brings the singular determination of the concept back to the universal.

In the doctrine of the concept Hegel makes several explicit references to Kant, both critical and approving, and it is clear that he sees his own doctrine of the concept is a development of Kant's. We will therefore go into a further investigation of the relationship between the two doctrines.

9.2 Hegel's Doctrine of the Concept in Relation to Kant's

Hegel's doctrine of the concept in *WdL* starts out with a treatment of the three main subject areas of the traditional (Port-Royal) logic. He orders the subjects exactly according to the tradition, beginning with the concept as such, then considering the role of concepts within judgments, and finally presenting the different forms of inferences. The changes Hegel makes to the traditional doctrine consist of giving it a critical and dialectical treatment based on his idea of a new, speculative logic. More concretely, Hegel seeks a dialectical connection between the traditional subject areas, meaning that the concept “develops immanently” into judgment and inference. I will not go into the details of this development, but rather focus on the apparent break with the traditional doctrine of concept that happens when Hegel announces that the speculative determinate negation is both a higher and richer concept than its predecessors.

Central to Hegel's understanding of what “higher concept” means is his adoption of Kant's idea of a synthetic or concrete universal.⁵⁵⁴ The particular content of a synthetic universal is contained *in* it rather than being *subordinate* to it. The most problematic aspects of this are, firstly, that the universal

553 TWA 6:273f.=GW 12:33.

554 KU, AA V:407.

concept on such an account becomes contradictory, and, secondly, that the content and extension of concepts are reversed. In the following, I will address these issues in turn. In general, it can be said that the notions of “synthetic universal,” “contradiction,” and the “reversal of content and extension” are re-interpreted on the grounds of the new way Hegel conceives processual or dialectical thinking, which means that Hegel in no easily recognizable way argues for or against a specific doctrine in favor of another. It would be more correct here, as elsewhere, to call his approach “developmental.” The new doctrine in a sense contains and grows out of the traditional one. Since the method of dialectical thinking is only fully accounted for at the end of the logic, I will at first limit myself to pointing out the general direction of Hegel’s changes to the doctrine of the concept. According to the traditional doctrine, a concept that is higher is always poorer in content than the lower. The concept of an animal does not contain *in itself* the particular concepts *rational* and *non-rational*; these particulars are subordinate to it. If the higher concept of animal were to contain the particular concepts in it, it would contain both the mark “rational” and “non-rational” and therefore be contradictory. It is likely Hegel’s understanding of contradiction that allows him to re-conceive the notion of a “higher concept,” making the interpretation one has of the higher concept depend on one’s interpretation of his doctrine of contradiction. However, as we will see, Hegel’s notion of a “higher concept” also sheds light on how this doctrine itself is to be understood. Furthermore, a higher concept that contains the lower concepts in it is a synthetical universal, which means that Hegel’s doctrine of the concept can be understood as an attempt to formulate a logic on the basis of Kant’s notion of the intuitive understanding.

As I have already stated, Hegel does not change the overall structure of the traditional account of logic, proceeding from concept, to judgment and then to inference. On the surface, he simply follows the conventional approach of treating the concept as part of a general theory of subjective thinking, where concepts are abstract entities connected in judgments and inferences. The actual changes can be found in the way in which the different subject areas are connected to each other. For example, Hegel tries to show how the concept *develops* into judgments out of itself, and how the different forms of judgment successively develop into each other. This is all part of the general program of “enlivening” logic, of conceiving it in an internally necessary, developmental and organic manner. The traditional account could be understood as being ordered from a notion of increasing complexity. Judgments are constructed by combining concepts, while inferences are constructed by combining judgments. For Hegel this approach is external; the way of combination is contingent, and one could just as well start with the complex inference and analyze it to get to

the simpler parts. It could be the case that understanding what a concept is depends on understanding its use within judgments, and it could be the case that, as in inferentialism, the meaning of “concept” and “judgment” is fully dependent on their role within inferences. The most properly Hegelian position is, as far as I can see, that concepts, judgments and inferences are interdependent in the sense that concepts develop through judgments and inferences, with the latter explaining what the concept has in itself to become. The proper philosophical presentation is still that of the traditional doctrine, of beginning with that which seems to be the simple, abstract parts of thoughts.

It must also be pointed out that Hegel *expands* the traditional doctrine through his introduction of mechanism, chemism, teleology and life into it. The general idea behind this, I believe, is similar to a claim implicit in the ontological argument for the existence of God, namely that there is a way to pass over from the something subjective, a thought (for Kant: something possible) into objective existence or actuality. However, since this part of the doctrine does not contain anything that is immediately relevant when it comes to the clarification of the most important characteristics of the determinate negation, I will leave it out here.

Hegel's presentation of the concept as such in *WdL* is to a large extent an attempt at showing how his own doctrine of the concept is both a continuation and further development of Kant's version. Generally, the cause of the difference between the doctrines can be found in the critical framework of Kant's philosophy, which, to put it in Hegelian terms, presupposes the “opposition of consciousness.” Since *WdL* itself presupposes that this opposition has been overcome, Hegel has to find another way to conceive of the concept, and find a new way to relate it to judgment and inference. This task bears with it the difficulty that not only concepts, but also, and perhaps even more clearly, judgments and inferences are undeniably subjective, mental, processes. Hegel's use of the terms suggests that there is something much more objective going on. His claims to the effect that “reality itself” somehow makes inferences, must seem confused, if not absurd, to many. I believe this is the reason why Hegel must make an effort to convince the reader that there is a deep connection between his and Kant's doctrine of the concept. The main gist of this effort consists in showing how Kant's connection of subjectivity with objectivity in his critical works represents some of the deepest insights of philosophy in the modern age, but that, to put it simply, Kant ended up emphasizing subjectivity too much. Hegel agrees that subjectivity structures objectivity, but believes that this is very much an objective process, since thinking and being are fundamentally one. In other words, Hegel takes one of the deepest, critical insights of Kant, leaves out the notion of a

thing in itself, and rather understands thinking itself as the root of everything. In the following, I will elaborate and try to justify this rough picture through developing a more detailed comparative analysis of the two doctrines.

For Kant the concept is a universal representation, which is opposed to intuition as a singular representation.⁵⁵⁵ For Hegel, the concept is not only universal, but also singular (much in the same way as Kant's idea), while the distinction between concept and intuition is blurred, or at least not taken for granted, since Hegel's doctrine of the concept is developed independently to the opposition of consciousness. For Hegel the concept/intuition distinction has its source in psychological or anthropological investigations and is therefore not appropriate for a *pure* logical investigation. The distinction between intuition and concept still has a place in Hegel's philosophy, but mainly in his philosophy of spirit, where the distinction is treated dialectically, representing a critical revision of this all-important distinction of transcendental philosophy. The revision itself becomes possible because Hegel insists upon treating the logical in a strictly pure way.⁵⁵⁶

There is, however, also a deeper, logical point that can be made for why the distinction between concept and intuition cannot be taken for granted: Considered critically, i.e. dialectically, anything that is differentiated also always stands in a relationship of identity on a deeper conceptual level. This means that the determinations of reflection have a limited applicability when it comes to a true conceptual presentation of anything. They represent necessary stages and spell out some important aspects, but leave us with a more or less unspoken contradiction, stemming from the reciprocity of the determinations of essence, if they are taken as the true and *final* essence of the object in question.

Although Hegel presents a critique of Kant's doctrine of the concept, the critique is balanced by an appreciation of many of the key notions of

555 *Jäsche-Logik*, AA IX: 91, § 1.

556 Cf. TWA 6:257=GW 12:19f.: "Die reinen Bestimmungen von Sein, Wesen und Begriff machen zwar auch die Grundlage und das innere einfache Gerüst der Formen des Geistes aus; der Geist als *anschauend*, ebenso als *sinnliches Bewußtsein* ist in der Bestimmtheit des unmittelbaren Seins, so wie der Geist als vorstellend wie auch als wahrnehmendes Bewußtsein sich vom Sein auf die Stufe des Wesens oder der Reflexion erhoben hat. Allein diese konkreten Gestalten gehen die logische Wissenschaft sowenig an als die konkreten Formen, welche die logischen Bestimmungen in der Natur annehmen und welche Raum und Zeit, alsdann der sich erfüllende Raum und Zeit als *unorganische Natur*, und die organische Natur sein würden. Ebenso ist hier auch der Begriff nicht als Aktus des selbstbewußten Verstandes, nicht der *subjektive Verstand* zu betrachten, sondern der Begriff an und für sich, welcher ebensowohl eine *Stufe* der *Natur* als des *Geistes* ausmacht."

transcendental philosophy, such as the transcendental unity of apperception⁵⁵⁷ and synthetic a priori knowledge,⁵⁵⁸ the truth,⁵⁵⁹ the idea,⁵⁶⁰ and the intuitive understanding,⁵⁶¹ all of which Hegel comments on in the presentation of his own doctrine of the concept. If we, *pace* Kant, take the latter as a source of knowledge that is actually available to the human being, at least when it comes to the investigation of pure thought, and reinterpret all the former notions, then we have a very close approximation of Hegel's concept of the concept, which are *all* of these, although in a recast form. I will comment on these issues in a brief manner, focusing on Hegel's expansion of these notions and its implications for the differentiation between transcendental and dialectical philosophy as far as their respective doctrines of the concept are concerned.

9.2.1 *The Transcendental Unity of Apperception*

Hegel declares:

Es gehört zu den tiefsten und richtigsten Einsichten, die sich in der Kritik der Vernunft finden, daß die *Einheit*, die das *Wesen des Begriffs* ausmacht, als die *ursprünglich-synthetische Einheit der Apperzeption*, als Einheit des "*Ich denke*" oder des Selbstbewußtseins erkannt wird.⁵⁶²

After stating this, Hegel goes on to quote a passage from Kant, where it is explained that this unity of apperception constitutes the unity of an object.⁵⁶³ For Kant an object *is* the unity of the manifold of intuition, but since this unity is itself constituted by the unity of apperception, the result is transcendental idealism, i.e. a doctrine where objectivity is constituted by subjectivity. It would lead us too far to consider in detail the reasons why Kant claims the unity of the object is constituted by the unity of the subject, but the general idea is that any representation – including the intuition of a manifold – can only be something for the subject as far as the "I think" can accompany it,

557 TWA 6:254=GW 12:18.

558 TWA 6:260=GW 12:19.

559 TWA 6:256=GW 12:19.

560 TWA 6:264=GW 12:25.

561 TWA 6:266=GW 12:26.

562 TWA 6:254=GW 12:17f.

563 TWA 6:254=GW 12:18: The passage Hegel quotes is from *KrV* and reads as follows: "*Objekt, ist das, in dessen Begriff das Mannigfaltige einer gegebenen Anschauung vereinigt ist. Alle Vereinigugn der Vorstellungen auf einen Gegenstand, mithin ihre objective Gültigkeit [...] ausmacht und worauf selbst die Möglichkeit des Verstandes beruht.*"

which is to say that the I that thinks this “I think” must be the same in every instance. The I is in a sense the material that connects each instance of representation. Without it, each representation would fade into nothingness, as a pure and unidentifiable, singular instance. In this way the I is constitutive of the unity of the object. For example, when something appears empirically, it appears in time and therefore relies on a connection between the moments of time, which, each being dissimilar, can only be supplied by the I. The I not only perceives itself in each moment, but also can perceive itself as this perceiving, and this self-perceiving (self-consciousness) is the same in every moment.⁵⁶⁴ The persistence of an object, its objectivity, is, therefore, supplied by the I or the transcendental unity of apperception. However, this does not mean that the I “creates” all of reality; the material of the senses does not come from the I, and “the thing in itself” as the real source of appearances is beyond human cognition. Within the realm of appearances, the transcendental unity of apperception only concerns the objectivity, i.e. the persistence and unity of objects, which is to say that it concerns their transcendental, and not their transcendent, metaphysical ground.

For Hegel, there is nothing that “lies behind” this objectivity. There is no reality “in itself” beyond appearances. The objectivity *is* the unity constituted by the I. In the context of *WdL* this means that there is nothing beyond the determination of unity that is supplied by the concept, i.e. the dialectical totality arising out of the preceding determinations of the doctrine of being and essence. Any “in itself” beyond the appearances is nothing more than the inter-relatedness of the appearances, or, more precisely, the conceptual movement appearing in and as the dialectic of the different determinations found in *WdL*.

Hegel then builds on Kant and gives a critique of him. He builds on Kant’s notion that subjectivity constitutes the unity of objectivity, but rejects the notion of a transcendent ground of appearances. For Hegel, the subjectivity that is the unity of the determinations of pure thinking is a dynamic kind of subjectivity, in the sense that it not only brings unity to the determinations, but also plays a part in differentiating them, which means that the manifold, or that which is unified within the concept, is, on the level of pure thinking, immanent to thinking itself.

9.2.2 *Synthetic a Priori Judgments*

Hegel does not explicitly say very much about synthetic a priori judgments in *WdL*, and the little he has to say is not easy to get a grip on at first. His comments are made in relation to his conception of non-abstract universality, and

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. Pippin, Robert: *Hegel’s Idealism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 23.

he points out that the traditional definition of a concept requires not only that it is stated to which genus it belongs, but also what its *differentia* is.⁵⁶⁵ This suggests that differentiation is essential to any concept, i.e. that a concept not only consist of an abstract identity, a single semantical marker common to a series of instances, but is also essentially related to the species together with which it forms a genus. Or, speaking more generally, it suggests that any concept is related to its other. Hegel goes on to claim that Kant has introduced this idea through his claim that there are synthetic judgments a priori. As I understand it, Hegel believes that Kant offers something that comes close to the general speculative notion of the identity of identity and non-identity with his conception of synthetic a priori judgments. On the one hand, a synthetic a priori judgment adds a predicate to a subject that is not contained in it, since it is *different* from it, and still, on the other hand, must be thought to belong to it necessarily, i.e. it is essentially identical to the subject, as determined by the *is* of the copula. This, however, seems to make the synthetical judgment analytical, which means that Kant, in order to remain consistent, must claim that it is still possible to think the predicate as not contained in the subject. This whole idea of synthesis is that of a non-contradictory combination of difference and unity, determinations that at first pull in opposite directions, at least on the level of reflection, and therefore makes contradiction hard to avoid without resorting to presupposing something that functions as an abstract container of contradictory determinations.⁵⁶⁶

Hegel's speculative approach, which indeed seeks to find the "identity of identity and non-identity," would not have very much to contribute to a discourse based on premises supplied by a Kantian framework. For Hegel, the question of whether metaphysics is possible, and the related question of whether there are any synthetic a priori judgments, does not, on a critical-dialectical analysis, make much sense. There are mainly two reasons for this. The first is that anything becomes possible as soon the level of abstraction is high enough.⁵⁶⁷ The second is that anything concrete will contain a contradiction, which, within a Kantian framework, would mean that everything is impossible.⁵⁶⁸

565 TWA 6:260=GW 12:22.

566 Cf. TWA 6:261=GW 12:22f.: "Schon der Ausdruck *Synthesis* leitet leicht wieder zur Vorstellung einer *äußerlichen* Einheit und *bloßen Verbindung* von solchen, die *an und für sich getrennt* sind."

567 TWA 8:282=Enz. § 143.

568 Cf. V 10:159f.: "Besonders in [der] Philosophie und Geschichte muß man sich die Möglichkeit abtun, [sie] ist nur Abstraktion der Beziehung auf sich; was konkret ist, ist

Taken on their own, both of these theses (that everything is possible and that everything is impossible) would misrepresent Hegel's position. The former concerns the abstract aspect of things, treating them according to the understanding and the determinations of reflection. The latter concerns the concrete aspect of things, where that which is different enters into a unity. We get closer to Hegel's actual position when we consider the resolution of contradictions as equally important as the showing forth of the contradictions inherent in the determinations of pure thinking. As we have seen, there are more paths open when it comes to understanding what the resolution consists of (and I have still to give a final word on this question). If we accept that the doctrine of the concept, as a new determination following being and essence as their unity or determinate negation, involves a final resolution of contradiction, then Hegel can be understood to be claiming that metaphysics is possible, but only as the metaphysics of the concept or the idea. If we understand the final resolution of contradiction to be the negative unity as such, then metaphysics could be possible as the metaphysics of this negative unity, possible interpreted as the pure activity of thought or subjectivity. This is a question we will return to soon.

Hegel's continuation of Kant in relation to the notion of synthetic a priori judgments is that Hegel believes he gives a new account of the secret, unknown X that Kant claims will account for the connection between subject and predicate in synthetic a priori judgments.⁵⁶⁹ In short, Hegel understands the X to be the dialectical method, or the movement of the concept. However, what this X accounts for is not so much the necessity of the connection between a subject and predicate in a synthetic a priori judgment, but rather the self-determining universal; "self-determining" in the sense that it is self-differentiating and contains difference in itself, basically moving from an analysis of pure thinking to a differentiation, which proceeds to form a unity of the original determination and its opposite through the determinate negation. In this way Hegel's procedure is both synthetic and a priori. However, he also considers it to be equally analytic as synthetic. The reason for this is that "the a priori" (pure thinking) is self-determining. The dialectical determination of a concept says what the concept inherently means, i.e. it states what is contained in it analytically, but

in ihm selbst entgegengesetzt, so ist alles Widerspruch, Unmöglichkeit, es ist aber alles auch möglich, wenn ich es betrachte in seiner einen Seite der Reflexion auf sich: Es ist [dies] aber [ein] vollkommen triviales Geschwätze; man muß etwas im Ganzen, [im] Zusammenhang mit [dem] anderen nehmen. In der Philosophie gilt nicht, was sein kann, sondern was sein muß [...]"

569 B 13f.

it also *adds* a new determination to the concept that is not simply identical to it, though it is at the same time contained in it. In a sense one can say that Hegel aims at a dialectical method that is synthetic by being deeply analytic.

As a final remark, it can be said that the determinate negation in Hegel can be seen as the continuation of the speculative idea that Hegel finds to be implicit in Kant's notion of synthetic a priori judgments. In particular in relation to the form it takes as the a priori synthesis of the concept, capable of grasping "die Zweiheit in der Einheit."⁵⁷⁰ This is an issue we will explore further in the context of the absolute idea and the method in *WdL*.

9.2.3 *Truth*

Hegel's conception of truth has already been commented on. It is a direct descendent of Kant's conception of it. In short, Kant conceives of truth as the correspondence of knowledge with its object.⁵⁷¹ Hegel points out that even though, as Kant says, there cannot be a universal criteria for truth (since truth concerns the specific content of something, which any universal criteria could say nothing about), the whole point of the definition was the *correspondence* of the content with the concept.⁵⁷² What Kant should have sought was a principle capable of connecting any given content with the universal determination of truth, making the former correspond to the latter. In Hegel's view, Kant was already in possession of such a principle with his notion of the a priori synthesis of the concept, but he was not able to apply it, since "das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung war ihm zu mächtig, um davon weg zur Betrachtung des Begriffs und der Kategorien *an und für sich* und zu einem spekulativen Philosophieren kommen zu können."⁵⁷³ What Hegel does in his appropriation of the definition is to understand "correspondence" to mean

570 TWA 6:267=GW 12:27.

571 It is clear that Kant does not regard this definition as his own creation. Cf. *Jäsche-Logik*, AA IX:70 ("Wahrheit, sagt man, besteht in der Übereinstimmung der Erkenntnis mit dem Gegenstände.") and B 83. Rather, he seems to be more critical of it than Hegel is, in particular in the *Jäsche-Logik*. Of course, Hegel is also critical of it in the sense that he seeks to transform the essential components of the definition radically, although he at the same time regards the definition to be "[...] von dem höchsten Werte [...]" (TWA 6:266 =GW 12:26).

572 TWA 6:267=GW 12:26. Hegel's use of the term "concept" instead of "knowledge" is indicative that he is concerned with truth in its universal, thinking, mode at this point. For Kant, knowledge can either come through concepts or intuitions, the former being concerned with the universal, the latter with the singular. Cf. *Jäsche-Logik*, AA 91, § 1.

573 TWA 6:267=GW 12:27.

that something becomes true when it goes through the development inherent in its concept.

The problem that Hegel has with Kant's conception of truth concerns not so much the conception itself as the inconsistencies between it and Kant's transcendental philosophy. Since, according to transcendental philosophy, it is impossible to know things in themselves, it is also in fact impossible to reach any actual correspondence between knowledge and an object. Only insofar as the object is the same as the thing in itself could there be any such actual correspondence. Hegel believes that Kant had already conceived of a form of cognition that would be capable of reaching truth, though Kant claims that it is not available to the human being. This form of cognition is the intuitive understanding, which we will turn to shortly. Furthermore, Hegel interprets Kant's transcendental deduction to have shown the unity of the concept and the thing, and this makes the deduction an example of what truth is.⁵⁷⁴ Kant, however, still relies on a given manifold as a basis for claiming that something is materially real, something Hegel does not find to be warranted.

We cannot go further into this here, but we can see clearly now how Hegel's dialectics connects to Kant's understanding of philosophical knowledge as expounded in § 12 of *KrV*. Hegel takes over Kant's understanding of truth, but transforms it into a matter of self-correspondence of the concept with itself, i.e. with the full development of the concept, through its initial stages, progressing dialectically through opposed determinations, and finally returning to itself, reaching truth, where the whole of its development is the objectifying of what it carried in itself, thus making objectivity correspond to, and unite with, the concept. This movement of the concept becomes the model or norm of truth also in other contexts, such as Hegel's philosophy of right, history, religion, nature, and so on. In these contexts, there will often be a stronger or even unresolvable discrepancy between objectivity and concept, which is due to, in particular but not exclusively, the externality of nature.

9.2.4 *The Idea*

When speaking of the concept in *WdL*, Hegel has the following comment regarding Kant's notion of the idea:

Es wird immer als etwas Verwundernswürdiges ausgezeichnet werden, wie die Kantische Philosophie [zwar] dasjenige Verhältnis des Denkens zum sinnlichen Dasein, bei dem sie stehenblieb, für ein nur relatives Verhältnis der bloßen Erscheinung erkannte und eine höhere Einheit

574 TWA 6:262=GW 12:23.

beider in der *Idee* überhaupt und z. B. in der Idee eines anschauenden Verstandes sehr wohl anerkannte und aussprach, doch bei jenem relativen Verhältnisse und bei der Behauptung stehengeblieben ist, daß der Begriff schlechthin von der Realität getrennt sei und bleibe – somit als die *Wahrheit* dasjenige behauptete, was sie als endliche Erkenntnis aussprach, und das für überschwenglich, unerlaubt und für Gedankendinge erklärt, was sie als *Wahrheit* erkannte und wovon sie den bestimmten Begriff aufstellte.⁵⁷⁵

For Kant, ideas are concepts of reason, and contrast with the concepts of the understanding, the categories. While the categories relate to the conditioned (appearances) and have their origin in the different judgments, the ideas represent the unconditioned in relation to human knowledge and have their origin in inference. In *KrV* Kant treats the ideas of the soul, world and God, each of which corresponds, respectively, to the categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive inference. Furthermore, these three ideas correspond to the traditional three areas of the *metaphysica specialis*, rational psychology, cosmology and theology. By following the principle of pure reason, which says that when something conditioned is given, then something unconditioned is also given,⁵⁷⁶ we end up conceiving of the idea as the required unconditioned given. When we do this – and this is Kant's main critical point – we at the same time go beyond the limits of reason and get caught in dialectical blind alleys. The result is that, theoretically, the ideas can at most be treated as regulative ideas, and, practically, as postulates. This leads to the strange result, namely that, on the one hand, Kant is able to conceive of what the ideas are in themselves, but, on the other hand, the ideas are, according to his own skeptical doctrine, un-thinkable or indeterminate.⁵⁷⁷ What Hegel probably means by claiming that Kant, with his conception of *the idea* ("der *Idee* überhaupt"), had formulated what the unity of appearances and thinking consists of, is that the idea connects the conditioned with the unconditioned. The idea is not the unconditioned itself, but the connection, or, even stronger, the *unity* of the unconditioned with the conditioned. As Hegel expressed it in one of his habilitation theses: *idea est synthesis infiniti et finiti*.⁵⁷⁸ Kant could also be said to share this view of the idea in that the idea is the "absolute totality," or the unconditioned as such, as far as

575 TWA 6:264=GW 12:25.

576 B 364.

577 Fulda, Hans Friedrich: "Hegels Dialektik und die transzendente Dialektik Kants," in: *Giornale di Metafisica*. Nuova Serie IX, 1987, p. 286.

578 The same is stated in *Glauben und Wissen*, GW 4:324.

it is thought of as that which results from the synthesis of the conditions.⁵⁷⁹ This brings the unconditioned, or infinite, together with the conditioned or finite, i.e. the unconditioned is no longer something *beyond* the conditioned, but results from and contains it. So Hegel thinks that Kant had already conceived of a unity of appearances and thinking, but points out that he had not developed it further since he was paralyzed by his own critique.

9.2.5 *Intuitive Understanding*

In Hegel's view, Kant had with his conception an intuitive understanding not only given the outline of the unity of the conditioned and unconditioned, but had also both explicitly stated and recognized what this unity is. However, Kant denied that intuitive understanding was within reach of the human being. It can at most be used as a contrast when trying to understand the nature of human cognition. Since we have already treated this issue earlier, I will just give a short reminder of the most important points. In § 77 of *KU* Kant explains that the understanding is discursive, meaning that it attains knowledge through concepts, and, furthermore, forms concepts that are analytic universals and not synthetic universals. The analytic universals contain only markers that are common to a range of objects, but do not contain any particular representations, which means that we can neither say something about the more specific nature of real objects from the concept of it alone, nor can we deduce the existence of any objects falling under the concept. This contrasts with the synthetic universal, which is a whole that contains its parts in it. This is characteristic of intuition in general: As soon as something, as a whole, is given in intuition, its parts are also given. Each intuition contains an infinite number of representations *in* it.⁵⁸⁰ For the discursive understanding, a concept is, in a sense, also a whole, but only has its parts, the particulars, *under* it. For an intuitive understanding, in contrast, the parts of a concept, the particulars, are contained *in* the concept itself.

For the discursive understanding, the relation between the concept and its particulars is such that the *content* (the semantical markers) of the universal concept is less than the content of the particular concept, which contains both the universal marker as well as the particular marker. Furthermore, the *extent* of the universal concept is greater than the particular; the universal has particulars under it, because the particulars exclude each other. This is the traditional understanding of the relationship between the content and extent

579 B 382f.

580 B 39f. Cf. Longuenesse, Beatrice: *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2007, p. 175.

of concepts. According to the traditional doctrine, particulars or species are formed by finding a marker that differentiates the universal. Particulars have their universal markers in common, but one particular contains a marker that is excluded by the opposite particular, which means that the particulars stand in a contradictory relationship. This is the reason for why particulars can only be contained under a universal and not in it. If the particulars were in the universal, the universal would become contradictory, since the semantical marker differentiating the particulars could both be affirmed and denied of the universal.

This points to a fundamental problem for Hegel's adaptation of the intuitive understanding through his conception of dialectics, which both brings forth the particulars from the universal as well as making them dissolve into it (or its further development as a singular concept).⁵⁸¹ With this statement Hegel directly contradicts the discursive doctrine of the concept. Related to this is the claim that the determinate negation, as the unity of opposites, is the *higher and richer concept*. I believe there is no reason to believe that Hegel committed an elementary logical error here,⁵⁸² nor that one simply has to reject his doctrine of the concept since it is not consistent with the traditional discursive one.⁵⁸³ It seems obvious that Hegel consciously challenges the traditional doctrine, since he chooses to use the designations "higher" and "richer" in a way that is not allowed by the traditional doctrine. From this it is clear that Hegel signals that he wants to present a new conception of logic.⁵⁸⁴ From the point of view of the traditional doctrine, the substantial objection against understanding a concept as higher and richer than its particular instances, is that it implies a contradiction. All synthetic universals are inherently contradictory and therefore impossible.

581 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, § 31 A. Cf. Fulda, Hans Friedrich: "Hegels Dialektik und die Transzendente Dialektik Kants," in: *Giornale di Metafisica*, IX (1987), p. 265.

582 Cf. Baum, Manfred: "Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Systematik und Dialektik bei Hegel," in: *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik. Formation und Rekonstruktion*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986, pp. 65–76.

583 Schäfer, Rainer: *Die Dialektik und ihre besonderen Formen in Hegels Logik*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2001, p. 256f and p. 326.

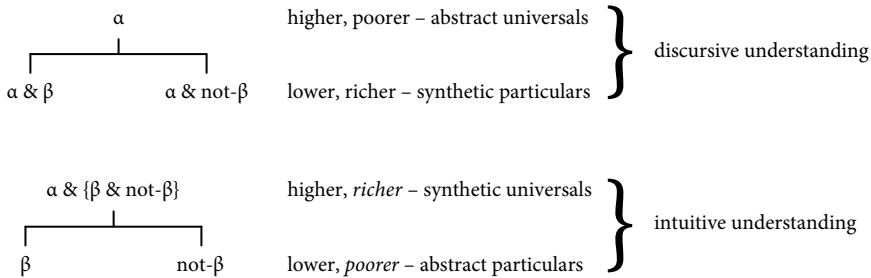
584 In his *Wissenschaftslehre*, Bolzano also challenged the traditional conception, but since he takes the opposition of consciousness for granted and does not follow an intention of a radical criticism of all thought forms, his and Hegel's project are not directly comparable. For a discussion of Bolzano's reversal of the relationship between the content and extent of concepts, see Centrone, Stefania: "Der Reziprozitätskanon in den *Beyträgen* und in der *Wissenschaftslehre*," in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 64, 2010, pp. 310–330.

The Hegelian reply to this would then naturally depend then on how one interprets Hegel's doctrine of contradiction. It seems clear to me that since the synthetic universal, or the determinate negation, is also a resolution of a contradiction, there can be no clear-cut way of saying that the synthetic universal, in a dialectical conception, is contradictory. *Becoming* can be understood as a synthetic universal containing being and nothing *in* it as particulars; conceived as parts that are fully dependent on the whole they become the determinations *coming-to-be* and *ceasing-to-be*. As parts that are isolated from the whole, they are determinations that mutually exclude each other. Initially, being and nothing make out the strongest opposition. However, they are only mutually excluding for the understanding, which seeks to conceive of them apart from their inner relation, i.e. through the whole. It is the task of dialectics to bring the particular parts back to the synthetic universal whole. One starts with an abstract universal such as *pure being* (that which is common to everything). Then the particular is brought forth from it, one proceeds to *nothing* (which also makes being into a particular and therefore fully changes the original universal), and then, finally, the unity of the particulars arises through a determinate negation. The result is a synthetic universal. From this it follows that although the synthetic universal that arises through dialectics is a product of a process, the parts of the process are only fully comprehensible as far as they are understood *as* parts of the whole that is revealed through the determinate negation. Only as the whole arises does the contradiction of dialectics dissolve.⁵⁸⁵

Hegel's statement about the determinate negation as a higher and richer concept is a provocation. It goes directly against the tradition. But it is also an external description, since the traditional ordering of concepts into higher and lower, richer and poorer, does not play any significant part in his actual

585 Manfred Baum offers a solution that remains within the Kantian, traditional, vocabulary: Cf. Baum, Manfred: "Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis von Systematik und Dialektik bei Hegel," in: *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik. Formation und Rekonstruktion*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986, p. 75: "Nimmt man dagegen an, daß der höhere Begriff derjenige ist, durch dessen Einschränkung der niedere Begriff erst entsteht, und versteht man diese Einschränkung *der Sphäre* des höheren Begriffes als eines Ganzen auf einen Teil seines Bereiches, so liegt dieser Fehler nicht vor. Denn diese Einschränkung erfolgt nicht notwendig durch Hinzufügung eines weiteren Merkmals zum Inhalt dieses Begriffes, sondern auch durch Aussonderung eines Teils des unter einem Begriff Enthaltenen, nachdem man das Ganze möglicher Fälle (Arten der Gattung) überblickt hat und nun einen Teil daraus hervorhebt, daß man alle übrigen Teile abblendet." As far as I can see, this solution is compatible with the one I have suggested, understanding "Aussonderung" as being the stage of a process of dialectical determination where the particular is brought forth from the universal.

doctrine of the concept. However, he occasionally makes references to the traditional designations,⁵⁸⁶ and there are some insights that can be gained by comparing Hegel's doctrine of the concept to the traditional one, using the traditional designations and Kant's conception of intuitive understanding. As we have seen, the traditional doctrine understands the relationship between the universal and particular such that the universal contains a marker common to the particulars, but not the differentiating semantical marker (the *differentia*). This makes the universal higher, poorer and abstract. In contrast, the particular is lower and richer, but also *synthetic*, since it contains the universal marker *and* the differentia. As for the synthetical universal, it contains both the universal markers as well as that which is affirmed of one particular and denied of the other(s), making it (at least apparently) contradictory, and both higher and richer than its particulars, which are lower and poorer. Furthermore, the parts of the synthetical universal are fully dependent on it, making the parts, when they are taken on their own, abstract. This can be summarized like this (Greek letters indicate markers and the curly brackets of “{ β & not- β }” indicate the special way in which contradictory markers are contained in the higher and richer synthetic universal of the intuitive understanding):



We can now also give a summary of the whole of Hegel's transformation of Kant's doctrine of the concept: For Kant, the unity of the concept is the I, which is also that which constitutes the unity of the object; for Hegel this I is, logically, a self-differentiating process that not only unites its material, but also differentiates it. For Hegel, Kant's notion of the synthetic a priori becomes the notion of the identity of identity and difference, meaning that, logically or a priori, certain syntheses are necessitated by the process of the concept's self-determination. This also is the ground for Hegel's reconception of Kant's notion of truth, where the correspondence of truth concerns the relationship between concept and objectivity. Furthermore, Hegel conceives truth as

⁵⁸⁶ E.g. TWA 6:250.

involving the objectification of what is contained in the concept, as a development through the different moments of the logical. In the end, when the concept is what it had in itself to become, there is also a state (even if momentary) where the concept is what it is in truth. Hegel also thinks that truth as a correspondence of the concept to its objectivity, is to be found, at least implicitly, in Kant's conception of the idea as that which unifies the finite and infinite. However, in Hegel, this conception is realized only insofar as the finite and infinite are conceived as dialectical determinations. Both are parts of the whole that is the "true infinite." The concept is in itself such a true infinite, a synthetic universal.

9.3 The Idea of Knowledge

When attempting to explain what is going on in Hegel's logic, I have referred many times to the dialectical method without going into a further explication of what it means. It is now time to do that. However, before we go into a more extensive treatment of how Hegel conceives of the method, we will look into his presentation and critique of the idea of philosophical knowledge. It is through this critique that Hegel formulates his own contribution to philosophy, the dialectical method, in which the speculative determinate negation represents the turning point where contradictions are resolved, and re-unification begins, bringing philosophical knowledge into harmony with itself.

As I see it, the overall aim of Hegel's treatment of the idea of knowledge is to unite theoretical and practical knowledge, a task that he has inherited from Fichte. The relationship between the theoretical and practical can be defined as the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, where either the former or the latter takes priority, is active, over against the other, which is passive. Whereas for theoretical knowledge the main concern is making subjectivity correspond to objectivity, for practical knowledge it is making objectivity correspond to subjectivity. The idea of knowledge contains both subjectivity and objectivity, but develops them into self-reversing forms. That subjectivity can take priority over objectivity within theoretical knowledge is something we know from Kant. Hegel follows in Kant's footsteps with regards to this. However, there are also many examples in Hegel, in particular in *PhG*, of how the subject is actually passive ("suffering") when it comes to its practical attempts and partial success at shaping objectivity according to its will. Rather than realizing its particular will, the subject undermines itself, and suffers the consequences (some of which, however, might indeed be, or at least lead to, a better

realization of what the subject has in itself to become). This is what is sometimes referred to as experience in the context of *PhG*.

There is a contradiction inherent in the concept as presented in Hegel's logic. The contradiction is that although the concept contains reality within itself, it has no other as a real other, i.e. an other which exhibits objectivity or poses a resistance to it. The subject is all reality, but this reality is unreal. In order to resolve this contradiction, the otherness must be made real, or, as Hegel formulates it, the abstractness of the reality within the concept must be filled with the content of the world that is presupposed by subjectivity.⁵⁸⁷ At first this subjectivity is present as drive, and is approached from the side where it must posit a reality outside of itself in order to realize itself. The process of this realization – the process of subjectivity that overcomes itself or frees itself from itself and its contradictory notion of reality – is the process of knowledge.

9.3.1 *Theoretical Knowledge*

Knowledge is theoretical insofar as objectivity takes priority over subjectivity. Objectivity provides a ground for the realization of the subject by being both something that provides resistance to the subject as well as being deeply rooted in it. In theoretical knowledge, however, this rootedness initially stands in the background. This, furthermore, means that the unity of concept and reality, i.e. *the truth*,⁵⁸⁸ is not yet achieved. However, if we take that priority of the objective over against the subject as something final, then there is no real possibility of truth; the subject cannot unite with objectivity, but only perpetually subject itself to it. The real determining ground of a particular state of knowledge will always lie outside the subject – it cannot unite with it, but at most attempt to make itself accord to it, something that can never be completely successful. On such an account of knowledge, knowledge enters into the contradiction that true knowledge is not true knowledge, since the real is always a beyond. For Hegel, knowledge *is* the resolution of this contradiction, or the overcoming of the finitude of knowledge.⁵⁸⁹ With true knowledge, it is realized that the positing of a beyond is necessary for the realization of the idea of truth. It is necessary to have subjectivity oppose objectivity at first; without such an opposition, no realization could take place. As the realization happens, the opposition is resolved into the idea, which itself is the realized, infinite beyond; “das Objekt ist daher zwar von der Idee des Erkennens

⁵⁸⁷ TWA 6:498=GW 12:200.

⁵⁸⁸ TWA 6:499=GW 12:200.

⁵⁸⁹ TWA 6:500=GW 12:201.

als *an sich seiend* vorausgesetzt, aber wesentlich in dem Verhältnis, daß sie, ihrer selbst und der Nichtigkeit dieses Gegensatzes gewiß, zu[r] Realisierung ihres Begriffes in ihm komme.”⁵⁹⁰

In Hegel's further treatment of knowledge it becomes quite clear that *WdL* is intended as a science that relates to the established terms of philosophy, terms that are in a certain sense classical, but today seem to have been made obsolete or at least do not make out any established canon. This is evident from the fact that Hegel considers knowledge in relation to its analytical and synthetical modes, the latter consisting of the determinations *definition*, *division* and *theorem*. The overall point, however, is not to adopt any of these modes of knowledge, but to criticize them while taking up anything in them that is true, and, furthermore, to develop them into Hegel's own absolute mode of knowledge, namely dialectics.

Analytical knowledge begins with the standpoint where the object is fully posited as real. The object has to be analyzed so that the subject can discover the truth according to which it has to direct itself. Analytical knowledge is the basis of the insights formulated by analytical judgments. We claim analytical knowledge when that which is claimed of something is to be found within this something itself in an immediate way,⁵⁹¹ requiring no proof, but rather the execution of a *task*.⁵⁹²

That analytical truths must be immediate seems to be inconsistent with the description of them as requiring the execution of a task. It could be that the character of being a task only concerns analytical knowledge insofar as it is a matter of mathematical statements such as $5 + 7 = 12$. Hegel does not, as Kant, consider such mathematical sentences to be synthetic. Indeed, Hegel claims that they are “very analytical.”⁵⁹³ The reasons Hegel has for making this claim reveals precisely what he considers to be the distinction between analytical and synthetical knowledge: In analytical knowledge there is no real transition between the terms that are to be connected in a knowledge-statement; in synthetical knowledge there is. Five and seven together make out the same *content* as twelve, while the sign of addition expresses the external demand (*Forderung*) that they should be brought together through a task of addition. The content of each side of the equation is the same, the task of addition is external. However, many analytical statements/judgments do not state tasks in any obvious way. The content of the subject and predicate is simply posited as

590 TWA 6:501=GW 12:201.

591 TWA 6:504=GW 12:204.

592 TWA 6:507=GW 12:206.

593 TWA 20:342.

identical. Still, there is an implicit task present, namely that of showing that the denial of the analytical judgment is contradictory. However, this is only a task when it is uncertain if the judgment actually is analytical or not. It does not affect the content of the judgment itself. So far as the content is grasped, it will immediately be realized that the subject and object are identical. There is no real need of proof in relation to analytical statements, since the transition from the subject to the predicate is immediate, which is to say there is no real transition at all. Deciding if the denial of the statement is contradictory can in fact only be done if it is already known that the terms of the judgments are identical. In this way the task is superfluous or external; at most it has the meaning of the subject becoming aware of the relation of immediacy.

All this becomes clearer if we take the dictum of Descartes into consideration. It is presented as an inference – “*ergo sum.*” However, it is not really an inference, as Descartes himself points out.⁵⁹⁴ The transition is immediate; there is no thought without a thinker, and hence it would be more correct to say I think = I am, i.e. dropping the inference-signifying *ergo*. It is possible to *try* to deny this (a task) if there is any uncertainty about the truth of the statement. Trying to do this, however, only has the significance of making a doubter aware of the connection of the content of “I think” and “I am.” Hence, taking Descartes’ dictum as an analytical statement means that as far as there is an “I am” there is also thinking, which is a stronger claim. That I cannot deny my existence without affirming it does not imply that at all times that I am existing I am also thinking. If I can perform the task of denying that I am thinking at all times that I am existing, then I would also realize that there is no analytical connection between “thinking” and “existing.” In judgments that are possible candidates for being analytical, the content of the subject and predicate appears to be independent of the task that makes us realize that the connection of the subject and predicate is external; the task is, however, part of the process of analytical knowledge.

A basic insight of Hegel’s logic is that there is no immediacy that is not also mediated. As should be becoming clear, this is also true for analytical knowledge. Take, for instance, the case of analyzing the relations between terms in a language (uncovering which words have an identical meaning). Here analytical knowledge remains strictly analytical, moving within the abstractly identical. All difference is superficial. Judgments of identity still make sense or provide information, since the terms themselves are different. And there needs to be a basic level of difference if analytical judgments are to make sense at all. Explicitly tautological judgments still carries with them a difference in the

594 Descartes, René: *Oeuvres De Descartes*, Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1983, vol. 7, p. 140.

sense of repetition or visual separation of the terms. In this way difference is also constitutive of tautological judgments. So the principle of analytical knowledge could also be said to be that of “identity within difference.” However, the difference involved is inessential. This means for Hegel analytical statements lack determinateness in a basic sense. True determination requires a difference that is inherent in the content. However, the analysis of the “I am” or other pure thought objects, as far as they are dialectically determined (such as when the I is determined as having the not-I as its essential other), can still be called analytical insofar as the dialectical transitions are given within thinking itself.⁵⁹⁵ It is a matter of thinking’s self-determination, an activity that remains within the sphere of pure thinking, bringing about nothing more than what thinking has in itself.

Synthetical knowledge is characterized by the attempt at establishing a necessary connection between determinations that are not immediately related. Hegel goes through different forms of synthetic connection – *definition*, *division* and *theorem* – which are all attempts at a mediation between terms that end up being unsatisfactory when it comes to the necessity of their connection. The overall problem for knowledge then is that the only option is between analytical (which gives necessary knowledge but does not really reveal new knowledge) and synthetical knowledge (which always bears the mark of contingency). We have already touched upon the problems Hegel sees in relation to the paradigm of definition, axioms, theorems, etc., as a determinations of knowledge. In his treatment of synthetical knowledge in the final stages of *WdL*, Hegel gives a systematic treatment of the issues concerning its contingency. This leads up to practical knowledge as an attempt at remedying the shortcomings of theoretical knowledge. We will soon turn to the issue of how the introduction of practical knowledge in the end also fails as the overarching concept of knowledge, which then leads up to the absolute idea and the concept of the method, but first we will look more closely at the nature of the contingency of synthetical knowledge.

In the classical framework of definition it is easy to recognize the structure of the concept: We have an object to be defined, the *singular*, the *genus*

595 TWA 6:510=GW 12:208: “[...] wenn das analytische Erkennen auch an Verhältnissen fortgeht, die nicht ein äußerlich gegebener Stoff, sondern Gedankenbestimmungen sind, so bleibt es doch analytisch, insofern für dasselbe auch diese Verhältnisse *gegebene* sind. Weil aber die abstrakte Identität, welche dies Erkennen allein als das seinige weiß, wesentlich *Identität des Unterschiedenen* ist, so muß sie auch als solche die seinige sein und für den subjektiven Begriff auch der *Zusammenhang* als durch ihn gesetzt und mit ihm identisch werden.”

proximum, the *universal*, and the *differentia*, which gives the *particular* or the species.⁵⁹⁶ In contrast to a dialectical definition, i.e. the movement of the concept, the traditional definition does not exhibit any movement other than that the parts of the definition appear arbitrarily one after the other; there is no internal connection, but rather a simple statement that they are related as singular, particular and universal – the definition *is* this claim. The reason why the need for a proof arises is that the becoming (the dialectics or genesis) of the concept to be defined is disregarded. Or, more precisely, both the becoming of the concept as well as its relation to the concrete external existence is disregarded.⁵⁹⁷ This is all grounded in the abstraction that is a condition for definition, but also points to what Hegel thinks is necessary for knowledge. One has to give an account both of the inner logical movement of the concept in question as well as how the concrete object that instantiates it has come to be. The development or evolution of something is not external to it. Rather, it is its inner life, in particular as far as this is related to the determinations of the idea. This means that a conceptual account of anything involves exhibiting its place within the whole process of the self-determining idea. We are now getting somewhat ahead of ourselves, but I believe this is the real source of Hegel's critique of the abstract determination in the form of conceptual classification. The only satisfying framework for determination is the holistic framework of self-realizing spirit, which is self-realizing through being self-knowing, i.e. uniting theoretical and practical knowledge.

This framework is as an answer to the fundamental shortcoming of theoretical knowledge, i.e. its contingency. In relation to definition, this contingency is two-fold: Firstly, the idea is not present in it, which is to say that the subject, for who the definitions are is not united with the objectivity of the definition. Secondly, the material which is used in the definition is taken from external existence, which means that contingency is an inherent part of it; the object can indeed have essential characteristics, and we can, on the basis of a dialectical critique of the concept of essence, claim that all that is essential must also appear, but we still have no criteria for deciding which appearances are essential and which are not.

The way in which the contingency shows up is different according to whether we are dealing with artifacts, geometrical objects, or objects of nature.

596 Cf. TWA 6:512=GW 12:210.

597 TWA 6:512f.=GW 12:210: "Die Definition, indem sie auf diese Weise den Gegenstand aus seinen *Begriff* zurückführt, streift seine Äußerlichkeiten, welche zur Existenz erforderlich sind, ab; sie abstrahiert von dem, was zum Begriffe in seiner Realisation hinzukommt, wodurch er erstlich zur Idee und zweitens zur äußerlichen Existenz heraustritt."

Artifacts (“Produkten der selbstbewußten Zweckmäßigkeit”⁵⁹⁸) can be properly defined because they are nothing more than that which is expressed by the *form* of something. The form of the artifact realizes a subjective end. For example, tools can be defined according to their purpose, and as far as a form serves a specific purpose or function, there is nothing more to the definition than stating what this is. The material that realizes the form can be left out of consideration (the matter can be substituted, the form cannot). Artifacts are, however, fully reliant on the subjective and contingent conditions of their creators. This spills over into the object itself, which only has a limited subsistence or objectivity.

Geometrical objects can be defined in a way that disregards the real nature of space, which means that there is nothing more to geometrical objects than that which is posited in them. Moreover, no account has to be made for why the space within which geometrical objects appear is as it is. For instance, it is not explained why space has three dimensions.

The contingency involved in definition is in both cases avoided by having the subject create a world within which there is nothing more than what is put into it. As soon as we start to ask questions about the status of the objectivity involved, contingency shows up: Why is a human being shaped in such a way as to be able to grip a hammer? What is the nature of the physical laws that make a hammer fulfill its function? Why does Euclidean geometry deserve a special place within our understanding of space? The objectivity of geometrical definitions and definitions of artifacts must either simply be posited or is only relative to any actual conditions, i.e. a form of objectivity external to the definition itself.

Contingency presents itself in full force in the definition of natural objects since the definitions in this case are to refer to an objectivity that is simply given. Natural objects present a manifold of properties, but how does one choose which properties express the genus and which express the species? How does one choose which properties can come into question as candidates for expressing the essential aspects of the object? The criteria should be laid down by the object itself, so that the subject could simply adhere to this objectivity in its definition. But natural objects are silent about their essential nature and the way it expresses itself in or through them.

What complicates the matter even more is that the reflection that tries to reach objective definitions is faced with a reality where things can exist in a way that does not correspond to what they are.⁵⁹⁹ This means that the dialectical

598 TWA 6:514=GW 12:211.

599 TWA 6:518=GW 12:213f.

relationship between essence and appearance, where essence is something that *must* appear, is severed in external reality. A proper definition would have to include objectivity within the definition itself, something which is the aim of dialectical determination. It seeks to include the realization of the object within the definition of it, implying that the abstract framework of definition must be abandoned or at least significantly transformed. There is nothing in the definitions of artifacts, geometrical or natural objects, which of itself can account for them having to be that way. If there were something like this in them, they would be analytical or dialectical definitions, which would mean they would either, in the first case, be abstract or, in the second case, have to give an account of their own becoming through themselves, i.e. the definitions would have to involve self-determination. Only a subject can be self-determining, which is the reason why real definition, or rather dialectical determination, must exhibit the nature of a subjectivity that also is capable of giving itself objectivity. The way this is done is first of all to show how finite existence is contingent and that only within a speculatively determined conceptual whole exhibiting processuality can there be any question of such an objectifying subjectivity.

This leaves little hope with regards to the objectivity of the definitions of natural objects. Still, Hegel points out the merits of certain procedures that stand closer to the framework of the logic when it comes to such definitions, such as that of defining animals according to their teeth, since the teeth are that which gives the particular animal subsistence over against otherness (the determination takes the relation to otherness as essential for the particular being in question).⁶⁰⁰ This is the insight that forms the ground of *division*.

In a definition it is the particular or *differentia* that gives something *determinateness*. The location of determinateness within the particular has its logical correlate in the self-particularization of the universal, where the universal that is conceived as standing over against the particular as determined in itself becomes a particular. In the concept this process of determination realizes itself within the concept itself. The concept never loses itself in its particularization, but is at once development and totality. The development is not a transition into another opposed determination, but a development where it is already clear that the process of determination is an explication and fulfillment of the concept. The concept that develops from universal to particular never seems to be a movement out of the concept, since the particular is itself both a concept and a universal. This form of determination as particularization of the universal “ist Grundlange und Möglichkeit einer

600 TWA 6:526=GW 12:219.

synthetischen Wissenschaft, eines Systems und systematischen Erkennens."⁶⁰¹ It is, however, a form of determination that is not explicitly present in the divisions of synthetical knowledge, which remain contingent. The determination of the concept happens through its self-movement, and, as we have already pointed out, empirical objects do not exhibit such a self-movement. The reflection that first attempts to find a universal through analysis is equally external as the synthetical division, which tries to find the essential differences within the universal as well as to give a comprehensive list of all the species. The species in nature are different from each other, but not opposed in a logical sense – there is not any animal species that is *negative* to another *positive* species. Within the logical concept, and in logical/spiritual⁶⁰² determinations in general, the self-movement is precisely a development into opposition. The particularized universal is a negation of the first, abstractly universal concept, and the particularization leads to the opposition of the particular and the universal concept, since the former creates a particular out of the latter. As this is a process, it is really a matter of development where something opposes itself to itself.

Hegel believes it is possible – in some cases at least – to transform empirical determinations into conceptual determinations, though it is unclear how far such determination is determination according to the concept or according to the thing in itself (a separation that cannot be overlooked as far as we are within the opposition of consciousness, i.e. when we relate to empirical objects and not those of pure thinking). Determining something according to the concept means determining it according to the truth, and such a determination can be understood as to bring truth to the empirical objects which in fact have no self-subsistence as things in themselves. An example of determination of empirical objects according to the concept is the following:

[Die] Farbe ist Gattung, sie ist eine Trübung des Hellen und Dunklen, das ist die Definition der Gattung der Farbe; nun die besonderen Farben, [die] Arten, [sie] ergeben sich durch [das] Verhältnis von hell und dunkel; ist das Dunkle [die] Grundlage und ist Helles darübergezogen, da haben wir blau, oder umgekehrt das Helle zugrunde gelegt und getrübt, so [haben wir] das Gelb. So folgen aus [der] Bestimmung der Gattung die Unterschiede. Das Gelbe zur Individualität erhoben, so ist Rot, neutralisiert Grün. Da ist Vernunft in der Einteilung.⁶⁰³

601 TWA 6:520=GW 12:215.

602 Cf. TWA 8:382=Enz. § 230.

603 V 10:220.

Not only can thinking, as both the singular itself as well as pure intuition, penetrate fully into the singularity of a perceived color, it can also relate them as particulars within a conceptual hierarchy. There is, however, no reason to believe that this is the one and only way of determining colors according to the concept. Empirical objects have a certain “pliancy” in relation to the determinations of thought, which points to the limits of theoretical knowledge (in philosophy of science one speaks of the underdetermination of theory in relation to empirical data). This limit shows itself fully through the limits of the *theorem*, which is the pinnacle – and ultimate failure – of theoretical knowledge.

The theorem has, as a posited determination, the immediacy of a definition, but since it is mediated through an other (its proof), it is a result or a mediated immediate. The different determinations of the theorem are combined not only through proof, but also through construction. The construction brings the material that is needed for the proof, while the proof itself supplies the necessity that is required by knowledge.⁶⁰⁴ Since it is a mediated immediate, the theorem corresponds to the idea, or that which appears last while really being the first (the aim). This is just like how in an inference the conclusion appears last, although it was the original reason for which the premises were posited as premises. As with both definition and division, the correspondence to the standards of the idea, i.e. of including the reality of itself within itself, is lacking; the combination of the different determinations and the mediation through construction and proof is contingent. A theorem can, for instance, be taken as a definition,⁶⁰⁵ and any definition is transformed into a theorem by asking for a proof. In this way synthetic knowledge either rests on a previous analysis or the acceptance of a definition without requiring proof. In both instances, as far as that which is analysed is not a pure object of thought, the resulting theorem will be contingent, resting either on subjective reflection or dogmatic assumptions. This is, however, not the only problem or contingency related to theorems. The proof itself is also contingent, regardless of how necessary it may appear.

The deficiency of a theorem is that its necessity, through being established by construction and proof, is mediated by the subject. It is therefore the subject that brings truth into the matter, and so the relationship of the correspondence of concept or subjectivity to objectivity, which is the aim of truth, is reversed; it is not the object that brings truth, but the subject. This is the point of transition to practical knowledge, where it is the subject that is the

604 TWA 8:382f.=*Enz.* § 231.

605 TWA 6:528=GW 12:221.

measure of objectivity. So the significance of this transition in the logic is that “das Allgemeine in seiner Wahrheit als Subjektivität, als sich bewegender, tätiger und Bestimmungen setzender Begriff aufzufassen ist.”⁶⁰⁶

9.3.2 *Practical Knowledge*

In practical knowledge the relationship between the subject and the object is such that the former makes the latter correspond to itself. In other words, the relationship of truth is reversed. Through its experience with theoretical knowledge, the subject came to know itself as the final mediating factor. Now it knows itself as the source of all determinateness. In this way objectivity and subjectivity have come one step closer to their unification in truth. However, at this point subjectivity has priority in the relationship, which means that the concept has not yet become fully for itself. The subjectivity that is the determining factor in relationship to theoretical knowledge is a singular, active subjectivity because it knows itself as this determining factor.⁶⁰⁷ Not only is the objectivity involved in theoretical knowledge subjectively anchored, subjectivity is the inner side of all objectivity. The subject therefore sees objectivity as a nothingness, an immediacy that is powerless over against it and the realization of subjective aims.

The finite aims of the finite subject, however, come in conflict with the idea of the good, which at first presents itself as the universal over against the finite aims. The finite subject is faced with two worlds. One is the world of the ideal good, the other is the actual world in which the good ought to be realized. That the good is not realized in the world already points to the problem of this distinction – why call something good that either is not or cannot be realized? As far as the good requires the activity of a finite agent in order to become realized in the actual world, the finite agent has an objectivity and self-subsistence that is greater than that of the good. How can the good be so powerless that it requires a finite agent in order to be realized? Furthermore, many facts of life speak against the ability of the good to become present in the actual world: There is no necessary connection in the actual world between good actions and happiness, there are often conflicts of legitimate particular aims of finite subjects (consider for instance Hegel's conception of tragedy), and any form of realized good can and will pass away due to external circumstances.

One would think the good would be able to resist external circumstances, and this is at least the initial standpoint of practical reason. However, as soon as it is realized that the good is powerless in this way, the result can be

606 TWA 8:285=Enz. § 232Z.

607 Cf. TWA 6:541f.=GW 12:231f.

that the finite subject decides to seek the good in a transcendent world, or it can try to come to terms with the good as something that, in the actual world, can only be strived for through infinite activity. Furthermore, the finite subject is confronted with the good as being something that implies that it must give up its particular aims. The good is universal. It is something external, to which the subject has to adhere. In many cases the subject has to give up its particular aims. The subject also experiences that the particular aims do not realize what was intended, but rather that through the realization of the particular aims, a more universal aim is realized, i.e. the subject suffers estrangement and becomes subjected to the cunning of reason; the *aims* of the finite subject are the *means* of the good.⁶⁰⁸ All of this points to a higher objectivity that is not a return to the theoretical standpoint, but rather the unity of theoretical and practical knowledge. What is required is to accept the objectivity of the universal good that the subject comes to learn through following its own aims and the way they undermine themselves.

The deepest threat to the will is the will itself. The will *is* only when it is actively bringing itself into existence; when it has realized its aim it ceases to exist. In order to be and to be active, the will must seemingly also want that what it wants is not realized once and for all. The solution to this conundrum is that the will must recognize external objectivity, that which resists its realization, as a part of itself. This is the point at which the idea of the good becomes processual. The good lies in the process of realization of the acting being, not in the realization of any particular, subjective aim. This means that the failure of actual realization of the good in externality no longer poses any threat to the will; the will initially knew the nothingness of the objective world, and this knowledge now gains the significance that the failure of realization is nothing over against the good, since the good is real, not in the result, but in the process of its realization.

The infinite striving for the realization of the good in the actual world is no longer understood as unsatisfactory, or as something that is to be overcome in some kind of beyond. The final aim is only realized as it realizes itself – it can be no more realized than it already is in the actual process of its realizing itself; there is no end point, no world and no heaven, in which that which ought to be becomes identical with that which is. This identity is real *only* as far as it is a living process.⁶⁰⁹ The realization of the good is, however, dependent upon the finite will that goes under in its finitude; without

608 TWA 6:543f.=GW 12:232.

609 TWA 8:387=Enz. § 234.

it the process would not be real. The speculative – or absolute – idea “ist dieses Spiel, sich zu unterscheiden, und in diese Unterscheidung fällt die Endlichkeit, sie ist die Tätigkeit, diese Endlichkeit immerfort zu vollführen.”⁶¹⁰ Here we could remind Hegel of his own words, noting that calling this “a game” can only be done as far as the pain and suffering is forgotten. Only as a thinking being can the finite subject realize the idea of the good. The realization consists of understanding and coming to terms with the externality of the world and the impossible challenges it poses to the good. The speculative resolution of the concept can be found expressed in art, religion and philosophy, and general (e.g. social) progress that can also be found within finite, human existence.⁶¹¹ This is as much as one can hope for.

9.4 The Speculative or Absolute Idea

Theoretical and practical knowledge strive in opposite directions – the former strives to make itself, i.e. subjectivity as expressed in conceptual activity, correspond to objectivity, while the latter strives to make objectivity correspond to the aims of subjectivity. Because the striving is never fulfilled both fail at becoming absolute idea. Speculatively, real “fulfillment” is not a matter of reaching a final goal, but of bringing the thoughts of “striving” and “final goal” together,⁶¹² grasping them conceptually as a reciprocally determining relationship: There is no striving without a goal, and no goal without striving. Finality means, speculatively, that the striving that is caught in a bad infinite of a never-ending task ceases to be bad. This happens through the equal acceptance of the striving and the goal. This makes them become truly infinite. The goal, the final stage of the logic, where objectivity and concept are one, is not separate from the process of its own becoming. The logic aims at the full presence of the structure of the reflection of pure thinking in itself. This is what is commonly expressed by the phrase “the path is the goal.”

When the idea is present as method, the way of its becoming is present as the innermost structure of this way, which is separate from the way itself only through a lack of awareness of the becoming of the whole. When we reach the method, we can now *know*, for the first time, what was going on when pure immediacy, pure being, turned into nothing, when nothing turned into being,

⁶¹⁰ V 10:222.

⁶¹¹ TWA 8:387=Enz. § 234Z.

⁶¹² In the sense that has been indicated earlier, cf. TWA 6:549=GW 12:236.

and so on – this is in fact just the final development of the movement of pure being itself.

9.4.1 *The Speculative Idea in General*

The speculative idea takes the shape of concrete subjectivity, or personhood, which is, although it is singular, not excluding of otherness, but rather the universal *knowing* of the kind that “in seinem Anderen *seine eigne* Objektivität zum Gegenstande hat.”⁶¹³ However, Hegel does not say that “not being exclusive” is, when considered in its dialectical consequences, exclusive – it is excluding of exclusion. He also does not say that including the other as one’s own objectivity excludes the other that does not have this significance of being the objectivity of some determination. This was the point of the dialectics of the *Fürsichsein*, which does not seem to be in effect any longer. At the level of the idea, there is no ambiguous relationship between inclusion and exclusion, in fact no dialectical ambiguity at all, but rather what seems to be a simple and final affirmation. Any “other,” opposed determination, is part of the personified concept, the I: “Alles Übrige ist Irrtum, Trübheit, Meinung, Streben, Willkür und Vergänglichkeit; die absolute Idee allein ist *Sein*, unvergängliches *Leben*, *sich wissende Wahrheit* und ist *alle Wahrheit*.”⁶¹⁴ Furthermore, this concept, the absolute idea, is the *only object and content of philosophy* and contains *all determinateness*. We must keep in mind that this affirmation, this simple ordering of exclusion and inclusion, comes as the result; the determinateness that it includes in it is not simply the previous determinations of the logic, but rather their *dialectical determinateness*, their reciprocity, which is the *real determining ground arising out of abstract ontological and metaphysical determinations*.

The content of the absolute idea is not a static object that can be contemplated in a state of rest. Rather, the content is the dialectical method itself, which means that it is not a typical determinate object, but the determining process itself, that becomes the object. The content is the previous determinations understood “in their development.” These determinations are still being relied on, but there is no longer any dialectical confusion; the determinations are considered in their movement. The concept as absolute idea is both the self-particularization and return of thought to itself, which will go on to take the shape of nature and later spirit. In the logic, the idea is still only logical, still only abstract in comparison with nature and spirit, but it is a form of abstraction that must be conceived as alive in itself, as that which constitutes the ground of concrete determination, since it is itself that which

613 TWA 6:549=GW 12:236.

614 TWA 6:549=GW 12:236.

passes over into otherness and returns to itself in itself. It then repeats a movement that we have already encountered within *Fürsichsein*, namely the movement of the determination *one*, for which the other is nothing. Since the logic remains within its own sphere, Hegel remarks:

Die Logik stellt daher die Selbstbewegung der absoluten Idee nur als das ursprüngliche *Wort* dar, das eine *Äußerung* ist, aber eine solche, die als Äußeres unmittelbare wieder verschwunden ist, indem sie ist; die Idee ist also nur in dieser Selbstbestimmung, *sich zu vernehmen*, sie ist in dem reinen Gedanken, worin der Unterschied noch kein *Anderssein*, sondern sich vollkommen durchsichtig ist und bleibt.⁶¹⁵

I believe this speaks of the nature of pure speculative thinking similar to how I interpreted it earlier, when I suggested that though it is impossible to really express the speculative as such, there is still the possibility of understanding it through having an awareness of the one-sidedness of every definite expression. This nature of speculative thinking only becomes apparent when it is asked what it is in its purity and when there is knowledge about the tendency of thinking to fall into “dialectical contradictions.” That there is no final word is then the final word of speculation, or the final word is the original word, which disappears as it is spoken, leaving nothing. Or better: Through that which is spoken, one *hears* what *is not* spoken, but still must sound in the background in order for there to be definiteness. That which is said as well as that which is not said essentially belong to each other. When this is heard through that which is spoken, which is to say that that which is spoken is not taken only as that which is spoken, but also as that which is meant, then the speculative is also spoken. To repeat, more precise still: When that which is meant is taken to be the opposite of that which is spoken, then the spoken can be heard as an expression of the speculative, which means that that which is spoken can become that which is meant. In a speculative expression then, negative dialectics is cut short, because there is already an awareness of the one-sidedness of any expression, and this one-sidedness points, through itself, to the other, which is to say that it means that which it would become through dialectics.⁶¹⁶ However,

615 TWA 6:550=GW 12:237.

616 TWA 8:391f.=*Enz.* §241: “In der zweiten Sphäre ist der zuerst an sich seiende Begriff zum *Scheinen* gekommen und ist *so an sich* schon die *Idee*. – Die Entwicklung dieser Sphäre wird Rückgang in die erste, wie die der ersten ein Übergang in die zweite ist; nur durch diese gedoppelte Bewegung erhält der Unterschied sein Recht, indem jedes der beiden Unterschiedenen sich an ihm selbst betrachtet zur Totalität vollendet und darin sich zur

such an attempt at expressing the matter, the nature of the speculative, would be reduced to meaninglessness insofar as there is no actual dialectics; it is dialectics that makes the expression of the speculative possible, and therefore it must always precede it. The speculative idea that remains within its self-identity will suffer the same fate as that of the one of *Fürsichsein*; it will split itself into many; the intended speculative idea that is spoken without a preceding real difference, or when this difference is either forgotten or is understood as insignificant *Schein*, then the speculative idea is always another. It shies away from being singled out, and every time it is spoken of it is always an other, introducing the many rather than the intended one.

The conception of the original word as containing a difference that is immediately taken back into identity is also the realization of the idea of a unity of form and content, or of the method as the infinite form of pure thought. This form is infinite in the sense that it is opposed to the content as well as one with it. The limitation that the content poses against the form, turns out to be none. During the process of the logic leading up to the idea, form and content are separate. The form of dialectics shows itself in the movement of the different determinations (the content), but as these determinations develop to the idea, the content becomes more and more determined in accordance with the form of the self-movement of the concept. In the end there is nothing left other than this movement itself. Therefore, when the end is reached, there is no new content to be adduced, only the form in its purity is present and the content of the exposition is the form itself. Consequently, it is only the absolute idea that exhibits a *complete* correspondence of form and content. All other determinations show forth a movement through their dialectical transitions, but this movement is something that can only be seen through reflecting on the matter. Insofar as the form of *all* the content in the logic is present as form, that which is present is the method.⁶¹⁷

In short, the method is the truth of *WdL*, it is that which has arisen through the movement of the determinations of pure thought, meaning that it also has arisen through itself, thereby being an instance of a *causa sui*. When the method is taken as something *apart* from the movement of the logical determinations, it gets transformed into an external form. So it is vital to

Einheit mit dem anderen betätigt. Nur das Sichaufheben der Einseitigkeit *beider an ihnen selbst* läßt die Einheit nicht einseitig werden."

617 Cf. V 10:224: Die Methode kennen wir aber ebenso, denn sie ist in allen Kreisen der Tätigkeit gewesen. Methode heißt es als unterschieden vom Inhalte, so daß diese Form selbst [der] Inhalt ist, nicht [die] Form, die expliziert wird an dem Stoff, sondern das innere Leben jedes Begriffs, das dialektische Entwickeln.

consider it in its truth, i.e. when logical determination corresponds to itself as form.

There is in fact a problem involved in taking the method *into consideration*, since the method is supposed to be knowledge *itself*. When we are presented with any content, the content must necessarily appear to us externally before we reflect upon it and try to grasp it. We can also have the method as content before us, but then we can only have it before us in a limited, untrue way. What needs to be added is the recognition that the method is that which allows us to have any content before us in the first place. As Hegel remarks: "Wie der Begriff für sich betrachtet wurde, erschien er in seiner Unmittelbarkeit; die *Reflexion* oder *der ihn betrachtende Begriff* fiel in *unser Wissen*."⁶¹⁸ This means that if we ask whether the dialectical method is *in fact* the conceptual movement inherent in everything that is real, if we ask whether there is such thing at all, or whether we are dealing with a construct of the mind, then we risk getting entangled in a similar problem as the one related to the attempt at finding the existence of God within the concept of God. Either we accept the possibility of a necessary existing being, and then the proof follows, or we deny it, at which point the proof no longer works. If we are not convinced at this point that the pure logical determinations exhibit the movement in question, then we will not be convinced that the method is truth in pure form. We would then have to return to the level of conceptual critique and investigate the pure forms that we presuppose in our denial of dialectics. At this point it is a matter of describing what has happened, of bringing consciousness to the movement, meaning that we must admit that something happened throughout the shifts in meaning of the pure, logical, determinations, which is now to be investigated and revealed.

In its simplest form, the method has three stages: Beginning, progress and end. As we will see, the matter is much more complex, and the question of the *number* of stages poses a special problem in itself. When we look into the pure infinite form of thinking, its content is "die Bestimmungen des Begriffes selbst und deren Beziehungen."⁶¹⁹ Whereas earlier, during the exposition of the logical determinations, the determinations made up the material of the movement of the concept, they now help determine what the movement itself is. It could seem tempting at this point, and indeed appropriate, to simply repeat the whole process of the logic in a summary manner, since this *is* the exposition of the movement. However, the movement in such a summary would happen with the consciousness of the movement, which makes it possible to present

618 TWA 6:552=GW 12:238.

619 TWA 6:553=GW 12:239.

a *review* or *overview* of what logical determination is and to make explicit what the *movement* is.

In the beginning there is *immediate, abstract, universality*. Its content is taken up from either of the spheres of the logic, it is a being, an essence or a concept, and it is the immediacy of *thinking intuition*, rather than intuition in the form of sensibility or of representation in general. It is, as the pure intuition of pure thought, “ein übersinnliches, *innerliches Anschauen*.”⁶²⁰ The immediate beginning is the fully abstract being, which, however, must not be understood as existence. Something thought and something existing have in common that they in an minimal sense are, i.e. they are *differentiated* over against another, and it makes a difference whether this or that thought is present. However, the pure being of thought is even simpler than this, since it is not different from anything, it is that which *is* regardless of whether or not it is something existing or something imagined. Therefore there is no requirement of a “deduction” of pure being. Pure being has already begun before anything more concrete can even begin to come about. Furthermore, the existence that develops out of the immediacy of the beginning is not any existing thing of sensible intuition. It is the form of any existence, an exhibition of what is *meant* when it is claimed that something exists. This is then implicitly also a critique of the notion that sensible, finite, existence, constitutes the only real and consummate reality.

9.4.2 *The Stages of the Method*

At this point we are aware of the movement that happens due to the beginning being determined as pure indeterminacy.⁶²¹ The drive towards further determination does not come through an external force, a subjective will following a dialectical method from without. It is also not grounded in that the absolute “overflows,” but rather in the lack of determinacy, i.e. the indeterminacy or contradiction that arises from the notion of immediacy as determinacy. Hegel can therefore not be seen to be a metaphysician of the “good origin.” He does not think of the human being as originally existing in a “blessed state” from which later on it has been removed from. There is no neo-platonic *emanation*, but rather the beginning is a state of lack. In reality all beginning, all origin, is unreal. Truth is just as much that which is always already realized as well as eternally realizing itself.

As the beginning is now viewed from the perspective of end, the beginning is known to be the movement towards itself. The beginning is the beginning only *of*

620 TWA 6:553=GW 12:239.

621 TWA 6:555=GW 12:240.

the end, and therefore the conflicts that arise, i.e. the dialectical contradictions, can be viewed as the result of the process not yet having reached the forms that are adequate for the expression of the truth. Still, the beginning is seen as the presupposition that is itself necessary for the realization of the end as end. Without the beginning the end would not be an end at all.

The beginning already has that which it is to become, i.e. the totality of determinations, in itself. The universality that forms the beginning, for instance being as such, the universality of everything, differentiates itself, particularizes itself, something which, furthermore, has the significance that the universal becomes determined. It is true that almost any phenomenon that we could take into consideration, almost any object, abstract or concrete, does not exhibit any form of dialectic by itself. The universality that they are determined as does not at first move by itself in any immediately apparent way. The significance of the method in such a context is that it makes it possible to treat the phenomena according to a self-determining, truth-evolving totality of determinations. This means to treat the phenomena according to reason. However, this also means to treat the objects according to themselves, since the method is "dessen immanentes Prinzip und Seele."⁶²² If we *add* something to the object through treating it methodically in order to bring out the reason within it, its logical structure, we would be "adding" something that is already there. It is better to understand the methodical consideration to be about making the immanent, self-determining nature of something become present to us.

In this way the method is analytical: It brings about only what is in the object itself. But it is also synthetical: It differentiates the original universal. What analysis finds is the same object, but as something different, though something different that still is the original object, but also its successor, which developed out of it. This stage of the process of determination, where "das anfängliche Allgemeine aus ihm selbst als das *Andere seiner* sich bestimmt,"⁶²³ is the *dialectical*.

Since dialectics show forth the determinations of the object it is a matter of *objective* dialectics, which was resuscitated by Kant. In Kant, however, dialectics mainly had a negative significance. Hegel believes dialectics is just as positive as it is negative. In general, dialectics has, since antiquity, been understood as having a subjective character. Kant stopped short of giving it a fully objective sense in that he understood dialectical contradiction to mean that reason is defective and not the determinations themselves. The aim of the dialectics of antiquity was to show forth a confusion of determinations, to show that any determination implies its opposite. The contradiction was taken to mean that either the

622 TWA 6:557=GW 12:241.

623 TWA 6:557=GW 12:242.

objective world or knowledge itself is unreal (as in Zeno) or defective (as in Kant). In both instances, dialectics *only* has a negative result, which is, for Hegel, the “Grundvurteil” about dialectics.⁶²⁴

This brings us to the *first negation*. For Hegel, the real source of the dialectical contradictions is neither the object, nor knowledge, but the *determinations* of pure thinking. Hegel's logic consist of treating these determinations *in and for themselves* (both abstractly and in their development), and in the logical consideration it becomes clear that the first negation results from contradiction. When a determination negates itself in its immediacy and passes over into its other, it is always a negation that is not “das *leere Negative*, das *Nichts*,”⁶²⁵ but a negation in which the initial determination is “*aufbewahrt und erhalten*.”⁶²⁶

The negation is not nothing because something of that which is negated is contained in the negation. We need only think of how being is contained in nothing in the sense that the latter is also determined as indeterminacy as such, and therefore a distinct something. Up until now the focus has been on how the previous determinations are contained in the speculative result of dialectic. Here the point is that the first determination is already contained in the first negation.

However, the first negation is also a contradiction of the first positive determination. Hegel elaborates the logical reason for the dialectical contradiction, as well as the reason for why it is not resolved, in the following way:

Sie [die erste Negation, T.S.] ist also das *Andere* nicht als von einem, wogegen sie gleichgültig ist – so wäre sie kein Anderes, noch eine Beziehung oder Verhältnis –, sondern *das Andere an sich selbst*, das *Andere eines Anderen*; darum schließt sie ihr eigenes Anderes in sich und ist somit *als der Widerspruch die gesetzte Dialektik ihrer selbst*. – Weil das Erste oder Unmittelbare der Begriff an sich, daher auch nur an sich das Negative ist, so besteht das dialektische Moment bei ihm darin, daß der *Unterschied*, den es *an sich* enthält, in ihm gesetzt wird. Das Zweite hingegen ist selbst das *Bestimmte*, der *Unterschied* oder Verhältnis; das dialektische Moment besteht bei ihm daher darin, die *Einheit* zu setzen, die in ihm enthalten ist. – Wenn deswegen das Negative, Bestimmte, das Verhältnis, Urteil und alle unter dies zweite Moment fallenden Bestimmungen nicht für sich selbst schon als der Widerspruch und als dialektisch erscheinen, so ist es bloßer Mangel des Denkens, das seine

624 TWA 6:559=GW 12:243.

625 TWA 6:561=GW 12:244f.

626 TWA 6:561=GW 12:245.

Gedanken nicht *zusammenbringt*. Denn das Material, die *entgegengesetzten* Bestimmungen in einer *Beziehung*, sind schon *gesetzt* und für das Denken vorhanden.⁶²⁷

At this point the movement of the concept reaches a turning point. This is what I have called the transition from dialectics to speculation, and is otherwise known as the negation of the negation, which, furthermore, should not be confused with the determinate negation, which is rather the *result* of the negation of the negation. There is almost no end to the conceptual weight Hegel puts on the turning point. It is the negativity that is the “inner source of all activity,” in particular *living* and *spiritual* self-movement; the soul that has all truth in it, and through which everything that is true is true; it is the ground of the unity of truth, as well as the ground of the removal of the opposition between concept and reality.⁶²⁸

The negation of the negation brings forth a new immediacy. The new immediacy is that which we have identified as the determinate negation in relation to the dialectical method. Within it the stages of the beginning and the end, i.e. immediacy and mediation, enter into a unity and a new determination. The particularization of the universal becomes one singular consisting of universality and particularity, but as ideal moments in it.⁶²⁹ Hegel remarks that the stages of the progress can be taken to consist of either three or four stages.⁶³⁰ This can be made clear from the following comparison of the different stages:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. (i). Immediacy/Beginning | |
| 2. (ii). Mediation/Progress | (ii). First Negation |
| | (iii). Second Negation |
| 3. (iv). Mediated Immediate/End | (iv). Determinate Negation |

There are two partially overlapping processes here. When taking the process to consist of four stages, the mediation consists of two stages, namely the first and second negation, as indicated by the roman numerals. The end stage is, however, not a unity of the first and second negation, but the unity of immediacy and mediation or the first negation, which is a new determination opposed to the first, while the second negation is the turning point that brings about the unity.

627 TWA 6:562=GW 12:245f.

628 TWA 6:563=GW 12:246.

629 TWA 6:566=GW 12:248.

630 TWA 6:564=GW 12:247.

The speculative moment – the third or fourth stage depending on how one counts – is the truth, since it is the cancellation of the reality of the first negation, the reality of the other, which brings it back to itself, not as a stable unity, but as the unity “die sich mit sich selbst vermittelnde Bewegung und Tätigkeit ist.”⁶³¹

The result becomes a simple determination again when the mediation disappears in it. At this point the result can become a new beginning. This new beginning has the significance that it is the starting point of a repetition, which means that it is also at this point that the form of the movement of the concept can be recognized as a complete form.

Furthermore, the new immediate determination that arises has the significance that it has been “deduced” or “proved.”⁶³² This then fulfills the task of the logic as a “deduction of the categories.” The new determinations arise through the pure immediacy of thought itself. The method therefore is the form that justifies the arising of the determinations, although this justification would be external if it only meant showing forth the form as such. The justification is equally present, and more convincingly so, in the content of the actual movement of the determinations that leads up to the determination that is to be justified. As the movement repeats itself in new repetitions, the content of the logical determinations grows and becomes more concrete; nothing is lost and nothing is left behind.⁶³³

Hegel mentions two Kantian objections to his conception of the method of philosophical knowledge, namely the limit of knowledge and the need to investigate knowledge as an instrument before it is put into use.⁶³⁴ His reply is that all such objections presuppose content that is itself in need of justification (one would have to justify why one starts with this content and not any another). The logical beginning of the method has the advantage of being made in pure indeterminacy. In pure immediacy nothing is to be presupposed (or the amount of presuppositions is in any case less than in the examples Hegel mentions). Furthermore, the method *recognizes* that any immediacy *is* in a sense presupposed – it is the negation of mediation, and therefore itself logically mediated. The ensuing dialectics bring about the contradiction inherent in this, something that at this point is clear, as far as there is a consciousness of the movement of the concept present. With this awareness it is

631 TWA 6:565=GW 12:248.

632 TWA 6:567=GW 12:249.

633 TWA 6:569=GW 12:250.

634 TWA 6:570=GW 12:251.

also clear that any beginning will be incomplete and it is necessary to begin with the incomplete in order to arrive at something that has the real shape of being justified, i.e. the shape of the mediated immediate.⁶³⁵ Furthermore, when there is an awareness of the structure of the method, it is also clear that the beginning is in itself the end, which means that that which develops out of the beginning, even as it contradicts the beginning, is inherently a progress that not only moves forwards, but also backwards *into* that which the determination had in it self to become, or, which really is the same, makes this determination explicit.

By this point, it should have become clear exactly where the speculative determinate negation finds its place within the method and program of *WdL*. What remains is a discussion of the question of the necessity of the logical progress, in particular the necessity of the determinate negation within the method. After this discussion, what remains is to give a summary of all the aspects of the determinate negation in Hegel's philosophy as they have been uncovered here.

9.5 The Immanent, Necessary Progression towards Totality

In order to complete the treatment of the speculative determinate negation, we have to address the question of the immanence and necessity of the method. As Hegel states in the introduction to *WdL*, the movement of pure thinking through the contradiction and unification of opposites is the way by which the system of concepts is *both developed and completed*.⁶³⁶ In the introduction to *PhG* Hegel claims that the determinate negation, as the answer to the nothingness produced by skepticism, provides the transition „wodurch sich der Fortgang durch die vollständige Reihe der Gestalten von selbst ergibt.“⁶³⁷ As I will argue here, the claims to immanence, necessity and totality („sich, zu vollenden“, „vollständige Reihe“) are closely connected. As Hegel himself states in *PhG*: „Die Vollständigkeit der Formen des nicht realen Bewußtseins wird sich durch die Notwendigkeit des Fortganges und Zusammenhanges selbst ergeben.“⁶³⁸

635 TWA 6:671=GW 12:252.

636 TWA 5:49=GW 21:38: „In diesem Wegen hat sich das System der Begriffe überhaupt zu bilden – und in unaufhaltsamem, reinem, von außen nichts hereinnehmendem Gange sich zu vollenden.“

637 TWA 3:74=GW 9:57.

638 TWA 3:73=GW 9:56.

9.5.1 *Immanence*

Immanence relates to the overall program of Hegel's logic. As I have shown earlier, he saw it as a lack that philosophy could not give an account for how it arrives at a specific inventory of logical determinations. Kant had made the same point against Aristotle's list of categories, but Hegel did not think that Kant had fundamentally improved upon Aristotle. If we cannot provide a way of showing how the basic determinations of thinking are interrelated, we will not get further than the enumeration of a certain set of determinations that we happen to come up with, and there will be many different „systems“, i.e. lists of determinations, that are possible. Another problem is giving an account of the unity of thinking. All basic determinations of thinking are exactly that, determinations of *thinking*, meaning that there is something in each determination that is equal to all others. We need a way of justifying that something different can be identical in order to provide a unified system of the pure determinations of thinking. The greatest challenge for unification is to show how opposed determinations can be unified; as some determinations of pure thinking are contradictory, we need, as far as we are seeking an immanent development, a way of showing how something can turn into its opposite.

With this method Hegel provides an answer to both questions. The method gives a way of *deriving* a system of pure thinking as well as providing *unity* to thinking. Hegel has to show that he starts with a sufficiently presupposition-less beginning, that this beginning is not static, but develops into different determinations, and that these determinations can be unified. The determinate negation plays a double role here. First, it shows how something negative itself can be something determinate, and, secondly, it shows how contradiction can have a positive result. As the creation of pure thinking proceeds from the initial „immediate indeterminate“, it differentiates itself, turns into nothing, but this nothing that it differentiates itself into is not simply negative – it is determinate, a determinate negation that is opposed to the initial immediacy. This determinate negation, which emphasizes exclusion, is what makes the self-negation and differentiation of an initial determination into something that has a content of its own; it accounts for the augmentation of the determinations of pure thinking, the transition from indeterminacy to determinacy. The speculative determinate negation comes in when differentiation threatens to dismantle the unity of thinking; it unites the opposed determinations that develop out of the initial pure state of thinking and the oppositions that develop through the self-contradiction of the subsequent determinations. Through the determinate negation we therefore never have to leave the sphere of pure thinking when developing a system of its determinations; we only enter deeper into it, into its self-differentiation and self-unification.

9.5.2 *Necessity*

It is therefore true that Hegel's method depends on the determinate negation.⁶³⁹ Can we, however, claim that the transitions represented by the determinate negation are necessary?⁶⁴⁰ We have good reason to believe that Hegel considered his procedure to be necessary; in particular, he claims that it is negative reason or dialectics that brings necessity into the content of science.⁶⁴¹ The common conception of necessity in Hegel's day was, as defined by Baumgarten, the following: "Schlechterdings notwendig ist, dessen Gegenteil an sich selbst unmöglich ist."⁶⁴² This definition opens up for a particular way of proving the necessity of a certain proposition, which was the one Kant made use of in his antinomies. If we are faced with a disjunction consisting of judgments that are, as far as we know, both possible, then we can prove that one of them is necessary by showing that the other is impossible. Showing that something is impossible can be done through identifying the way in which it is contradictory (either by showing that it is itself a contradiction or that it leads to one). This gives the following general procedure of proof: We find a statement that we wish to prove and find its contradictory negation, then we show that the opposite is contradictory, which means that the initial statement is necessarily true. E.g.:

639 Cf. Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls. Hegels spekulative Dialektik in der "Wissenschaft der Logik,"* Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001, p. 115: "Die bestimmte Negation ist, wie dargelegt, die Grundlage des spekulativen Ganges. Mit ihr steht und fällt die 'Methode'."

640 See *ibid.*, p. 116, for an example of an argument against that the transitions are necessary. Utz claims that the determinate negation gains determinacy in a way that is external to the immanent progression of pure thinking and is therefore contingent. The determinate negation is a negation that is *determinate*, but this determinacy does not come from the fact that it is a negation. As far as I can see, Utz conceives Hegel's claim about the necessity of the logic too rigidly. The determinate negation as such is not a "magic" operator that brings progression with it immanently, but a description of a certain stage in a process of determination that depends on the recognition of the whole of the speculative movement of the concept. When we have this whole in view, we can progress further than the traditional "nothingness" and "illusion" that results from contradiction and dialectics.

641 TWA 8:173=Enz. § 81: "Das Dialektische macht daher die bewegende Seele des wissenschaftlichen Fortgehens aus und ist das Prinzip, wodurch allein *immanenter Zusammenhang und Notwendigkeit* in den Inhalt der Wissenschaft kommt, so wie in ihm überhaupt wahrhafte, nicht äußerliche Erhebung über das Endliche liegt."

642 Baumgarten: *Metaphysica*, Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog 2011, § 101.

Both A and not A seem possible.
 Not A is, however, actually impossible.
 Therefore A is necessary.

This procedure does not work in the context of the pure determinations of thinking that Hegel treats in his logic. Hegel's logic does not contain statements about certain matters of fact that can be true or false, so it seems that a procedure such as the one above will tell us nothing about what Hegel means by "necessity." Still, it is clear that Hegel thinks that the procedure in his logic is closely related to Kant's procedure in the antinomies. Furthermore, Hegel himself makes use of traditional doctrines as a contrast when presenting the peculiarities of his own. We have seen this already in relation to his claim that the determinate negation is a "higher and richer concept." I think Hegel has something similar in mind when he speaks of necessity. He is making a claim that can be compared to and understood in the light of the traditional doctrines, but in fact changes how we conceive of the fundamental determinations of philosophy. These are now understood as consisting of a movement. However, the comparative analysis is still informative when it comes to getting a grasp of the significance of this movement, and so I will continue with it here.

In the logic we are faced with a series of opposed determinations, and each determination is shown to lead to a contradiction. If we transform the content of the determinations into claims, then we could prove that both of them are impossible. We could now try to argue that we are dealing with a contrary opposition, but this is not what Hegel does. In order to be able to proceed from the dead end that arises from the movement of the determinations, Hegel relies on his doctrine that contradictions do not resolve into nothing but into something determinate. He relies on it at least in two important ways. First (a) an initial determination contradicts itself. However, the result of this is not nothing, but rather the opposed determination. Then this movement repeats itself for the opposed determination. Secondly (b), according to the traditional doctrine we would have to say that both determinations are, as contradictory, impossible, and therefore that we cannot judge one way or the other – we are left with what seems to be a necessary indeterminacy; we cannot go one way or the other – Hegel's answer to this indeterminacy is the speculative unity of opposites.

I have already shown how Hegel believes that his different conceptions of the determinate negation are an answer to both (a) and (b). For Hegel, any contrastive determination, i.e. any negation of something real, is itself inherently positive. This is the point Hegel has to make believable when showing that the progress of pure thinking does not stop at the first indeterminacy (a).

With regards to the second indeterminacy (b), I believe what he basically does is to show that this is an instance of (a). The indeterminacy that arises from the impossibility of going either one way or the other is itself opposed to the option of going both ways at once – which leads to the speculative unification. We can imagine an *Aufbruch* at the point where we cannot go one way or the other, i.e. that we settle with indeterminacy or indifference as the last word.⁶⁴³ This could be called a Schellingian option, if we bring to mind the idealist discussion about the notion of the “appearing absolute” and indifference in Jena. Hegel, I believe, would attempt to show that anything we can introduce as “indifference,” “Aufbruch,” “indeterminacy,” etc., at the point where negative dialectics has run its course of dismantling rigid determinations is always itself a negation, and therefore inherently determinate, though it is supposed to be “beyond determination.” The speculative in Hegel is a positively conceived “beyond,” a beyond that will always continue to show forth the “pulse” of dialectical reversals. Hegel builds on the point that an “indifferent beyond” will appear, contradict itself and disappear into the process of his logic. This shows itself, I believe, through the fact that contradiction keeps on returning throughout the logic, and that no final point of rest can be found. Both the transition from an initial determination into its opposite as well as the transition from these two opposed determinations into their unity is *dialectical* and therefore necessary. Dialectics (negative reason) and speculation (positive reason) are two sides of reason. The relationship between them is that of a continuous, processual interaction. Any seemingly final determination that reason finds, it challenges, and as far as it identifies a contradiction, it cannot rest, but must continue.

Hegel does not offer any mechanical procedure of deciding which transitions are necessary and which are not. The necessity of a transition must be made believable in each case, and we can also make improvements on the transitions as we come to understand better what is going on. However, some general arguments can be made as to why one possible unity of opposed

643 Utz, Konrad: *Die Notwendigkeit des Zufalls. Hegels spekulative Dialektik in der “Wissenschaft der Logik,”* Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2001, p. 118: “Eben daß es im bestimmten Negationsverhältnis zum (ansonsten ebenso bestimmungslosen und leeren) reinen Nichts steht, zeigt doch, so könnte man erwägen, daß nicht alle Bestimmung und Negation aus ihm getilgt ist. Ein Negationskonzept, das auch diese Gegensatzung ausschließt, wäre beispielsweise das ‘neti-neti’...oder das ‘Mu’ im Zen-Buddhismus. Diese stellen gewissermaßen ‘negationslose Negation’ dar, die jede Bestimmung abspricht, aber zugleich keine Bestimmung ausschließt; die weder als Negation Affirmation von etwas (der Negationsbestimmung) ist, noch dessen Negation, aber die aber auch weder Negation nicht ist, noch Affirmation nicht ist.”

determinations is to be preferred over another.⁶⁴⁴ If we reject that Hegel is successful in justifying the necessity of a transition into another determination, this could mean either that we are satisfied with how a determination is defined by the understanding and that the dialectical reversal is unsuccessful, or that a unification of opposites does not follow in the way Hegel suggests. If we reject the dialectical reversals, which is a successor to skeptical critique, we risk dogmatism, and if we reject speculative unification, we risk forgetting that Hegel has given us good reason to believe that the determinations dissolve by themselves. This means that if we deny, for instance, that being and nothing necessarily pass over into becoming, then Hegel can ask us what exactly we are denying. He has already shown that being passes over into nothing and *vice versa*, which means that our only option is to say that we have come to a cognitive impasse. We could suggest stopping at the dialectical deconstruction of the determinations, i.e. stopping at negative dialectics. This presupposes that we have a grasp of some basic determinations in order for this to be a cognitively clear stance: If we say that the speculative unification of the result of dialectics is contingent, we make use of a plethora of determinations: *Something is contingent as opposed to necessary*. If we analyse these determinations, we will easily find further determinations such as *relation, difference and identity*, etc. All of these determinations are criticized by Hegel, which means that he threatens to render any statement we can make that does not allow for some unifying speculative framework incoherent. Our best option for rejecting speculative unification therefore seems to be non-cognitive; it is a matter of our will or our dislike of speculation. We would then effectively leave the field of philosophy.

Hegel is, however, providing us with an option where the cognitive impasse seems the strongest, namely that of the speculative unification, which I think can be properly said to represent *a constitutive logical act that gives sense to conceptual dissolution*. I think this is the substantial claim involved in Hegel's view of necessity in relation to the transition from negative dialectics to positive reason. One could also call this a form of abduction or an inference to the best explanation; what Hegel offers is an explanation of what is going on within our thinking process as it reaches the most extreme state of dialectical confusion, while the skeptic or negative dialectician offers no such thing, supplying at most the *material* for a speculative explanation.⁶⁴⁵ When the

644 Forster, Michael: "Hegel's dialectical method," in: Fredrick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 145ff.

645 The process of inference would be roughly something like this: We are faced with a philosophical problem that bears the marks of a dialectical movement, and the speculative philosopher, knowing how and why such a confusion arises out of the understanding

speculative philosopher has suggested an explanation, this effectively changes the conditions of the argument, since the skeptic is faced with a new object, which cannot be rejected on the same grounds as previously.

It should be clear by now that Hegel does not have the traditional sense of necessity in mind when he claims that the progression of pure thinking is necessary. We can speak of necessity in relation to a purpose, as when, for instance, we say that we *have to* practice in order to be ready for the concert. When considering the relationships between an earlier and later stage of a development, we can give an explanation of why the later stage is necessary through pointing to something in the earlier stage that was *a need* that was satisfied by the later stage. We often say things like “I have to do this, because if I do not I will [encounter this or that specific problem].” This does not mean that we have a rigid, mechanical necessity in mind, but that insofar as we accept certain conditions and recognize specific needs then there is nothing left other than to act. In principle we could decide not to and therefore the necessity is not mechanical. In addition, there are many possible ways of meeting a need; which one we choose (or are able to imagine) is contingent. Still, if we allow the action of meeting a need through a specific solution to be the main source of necessity, then the action itself is what made it actually necessary.

This is a form of (internal) teleological necessity, and it has been argued that this is the form of necessity Hegel has in mind.⁶⁴⁶ I think that the acts of conceptual unification that Hegel provides can be seen as answers to the following demands or needs:

1. The demand of a connection of the basic determinations of pure thinking. What Hegel proposes is then partially creative and partially historically contingent. There could be other ways of combination, but given the traditional repertoire of determinations and certain general guidelines, some specific connections are more sensible than others.

itself, suggest that the real reason for the confusion has to lie within the thought-determinations involved in the problem. Knowing how speculative reason can resolve such problems through connecting opposed determinations within an overarching whole, the speculative philosopher can offer a way to both explain why the problem arises and a specific way out of it. In cases where there are more speculative resolutions, the best explanation would be chosen according to certain general principles, such as which resolution has the “*greater proximity in conceptual content* to the two contrary categories being unified,” as argued in Forster, Michael: “Hegel’s Dialectical Method,” in: Fredrick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 147.

646 Cf. Forster, Michael: “Hegel’s Dialectical Method,” in: Fredrick C. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 138f.

2. The demand of a unity of knowledge, which, particularly in the context of the philosophical problems of Hegel's time, is the demand for a positive resolution to the problem of the antinomical nature of pure reason.

It may turn out that the concrete transitions are at least to some extent contingent, and this could perhaps be taken to imply that Hegel imposes a structure on the material of thinking that is not there, which also could be taken to mean that Hegel is playing God; what he does in the transitions of the logic is to simulate God-like acts of logical creation, creations that are, however, subjective and contingent. When we look to Hegel's concept of necessity, we find that something, a condition aimed at realizing some determinate end, becomes necessary through the *act of realization*. This is similar to how future possibilities become necessary through specific acts. Whatever turns out to be necessary can only be seen in retrospect. But the necessity of the logic is therefore also mediated by Hegel's creative logical work. This must be admitted, which means that the logic is contingent in this way – but, I think this is unproblematic. It is contingent in the sense that a great work of art is contingent; it could have been otherwise, and there can also be variations within it, and varieties of interpretation, but it all still comes together in the same whole, which, in the case of the logic, is the concept. All the transitions throughout the logic are stages in the revelation of the concept and reveal the unity of thinking, which can find itself in and unite all seeming differences. *All* transitions in the logic are determinate negations, variations on the theme of the emergence of an overarching speculative unity of opposites.

Hegel himself admits that the logic is not perfect, and he makes improvements to or at least changes or presents different versions of it.⁶⁴⁷ The necessity of the logic can be specified generally through ideals or guidelines, and “the demands of reason.” The particular transitions that follow these guidelines can be improved upon, something that is a matter of *invention*, but is still bound to the ideal of a unify of reason through a resolution of the contradictions that arises within it. Furthermore, there are presuppositions to the project of a science of logic, such as a human language and a certain level of development of logical thinking, but that presuppositions have to be made does not in any way decisively put an end to Hegel's project of a science of logic; they may influence the particular content, but they do not challenge the basic movement of pure thinking that Hegel claims to have identified.

647 TWA 5:50=GW 21:38.

9.5.3 *Totality*

Hegel's conception of totality builds, I believe, on a suggestion made by Kant that we have already encountered, namely that the trichotomy exhausts the different shapes that a philosophical material can take.⁶⁴⁸ When we are dealing with a specific position (a judgment) or a determination, it can either be opposed to another specific position, or it is combinable with the other position. The novel idea in Hegel's philosophy is that we can both oppose and unify different positions. In order to reach totality, we have to pass through all the different possible forms, including the one where two positions are opposed, as well as the overarching speculative view that unifies both. The method of Hegel's philosophy provides the means for ensuring that totality is reached, since it considers all possible points of view, and makes all of them into integral parts of the movement of an immanently self-developing whole. The initial position contradicts itself and therefore gives rise to the opposite, which, since it also contradicts itself, dissolves the opposition and turns into the speculative determinate negation, which unifies the opposition. In this way, all the possible shapes can be covered.

However, Hegel does not make any claim that all possible specific forms of all areas have actually been covered. For instance, he does not claim that all possible forms have been covered in the logic.⁶⁴⁹ To be more precise: *In general*, the forms have been covered, but the content can still be expanded on at the level of detail.⁶⁵⁰ It also seems to go too far to say that all possible, specific forms of consciousness have been covered in *PhG*. That the general totality has been covered, however, seems more plausible. The general totality of *PhG* is that of consciousness (the subject determined by an external object;

648 KU, AA V:197.

649 See Roser, Andreas: *Ordnung und Chaos*, Hildesheim: Olms 2004, p. 9 and 95ff. Roser refers to the so-called Hotho-transcript, where Hegel claims the following (quoting from Roser, Andreas: *Ordnung und Chaos*, Hildesheim: Olms 2004, p. 940 (page 38, right hand side, in the original transcript)): "Diese Kathegorien hat schon Aristoteles angeführt. Kant zählt davon zwölf. Man könnte nun die Frage aufwerfen: wieviel es Kathegorien geben müsse, denn das Feld des Verstandes müsse sich ausmessen lassen. Die Zahl aber ist hier höchst gleichgültig, wenn man sich auch das Bewußtsein geben wollte, daß man das Gebiet des Verstandes in seiner Totalität vollendet hätte. Diese Kathegorien kann man auch sagen haben keine Zahl, weil hier sich weiter combinieren läßt."

650 I use the term "general" here in order to emphasize that there may be certain forms that have not been covered. The term "universal" suggests that the essence of all forms have been found. To claim that the general but maybe not the universal form has been found opens up for the possibility that the discovery of some new, specific form may force us to reconsider the whole (i.e. the general form).

theoretical philosophy), self-consciousness (the subject determining an external object; practical philosophy) and reason (the self-determining subjectivity that is one with itself; unity of practical and theoretical philosophy), while for the logic it is being (immediate, but implicitly relational, determinations), essence (explicitly relational determinations) and the concept (the self-related, internally differentiated singular). Philosophical works can be said to present totalities insofar as they are generally complete as well as contain a sufficient level of specificity. What level is sufficient depends on historical matters and is contingent. A work of logic in the Hegelian sense would be sufficiently complete if it covers the typical pure determinations of thought representative of the age as well as those of history. However, the totalities are reached through the detailed developments of a specific work, and must therefore not be viewed as simply presupposed, but something that emerges immanently. The immanent determination therefore presents a guideline that is internal to thought, and provides a measure for the external material. The ideal form of a philosophical work is such that it connects general and specific totality by proceeding from abstract generality to concrete specification and back to the generality, which then becomes concrete.

I have on more occasions addressed the question of whether or not there is a final resolution of contradiction in Hegel's philosophy, a resolution that is equally the full appearance of *the* final totality. The answer is yes insofar as the final totality is the method or the pure movement of thinking itself. The answer is no insofar as this means that philosophy ends with this totality. The finality of the method is, however, a processuality, or the insight into the whole structure of the movement of pure thinking. More than this we cannot say based on an interpretation of *WdL*. In order to consider the question of totality in relation to the philosophy of nature and spirit that follows the logic, at least in Hegel's *Enz.*, I would have to get into an extended treatment of these works, and I will not attempt this here. I will, however, provide some general remarks on how I think one can approach this issue which are consistent with the understanding of Hegel's philosophy that I have developed up until now.

As soon as we have a grasp of the processuality of the method at the end of the logic, we can start to consider the objects of consciousness according to it. As far as this consideration will have to treat objects that are external to us, we can never know them fully, i.e. we will rely on methods of knowledge that are flawed. This means that we will have to continually reshape any system that we produce based on the dialectical method. We could interpret this to mean that the process of knowledge is a bad infinite. However, we must then remember that the bad infinite is in the end not separate from the true infinite; we get to the true infinite through realizing how the bad infinite forms the background

for a shift into the true infinite. That we cannot, as finite knowers, penetrate fully into the finite, gives us the opportunity of bringing attention to the reasons for this, and what we have to do in order to increase knowledge. Philosophy can only be infinite, true, knowledge, insofar as it is the self-knowledge of a knower. The anthropology that is implicit in this outlook is, as far as I can determine, a special kind of dualism, where we have full unity on one side of the gap: The human being is, as a sensory being, finite, and also, qua a purely thinking being, truly infinite. When we consider the sensory, the task of knowledge will be infinite, infinitely expandable and always fallible; when we consider ourselves as thinking beings, we already have complete knowledge as self-consciousness (the concept in the logic is the abstract form of this self-knowledge). The real work of the philosopher after the development of the insight into the logical movement of the concept lies between these extremes; it lies in the explanation of the connection between the internal and external field of human inquiry.

What Hegel has to offer in relation to this is his philosophy of nature and of spirit. We could ask then, if there is a final resolution of contradiction at the end of the philosophy of spirit. I think there is not; there is only *satisfaction* [Befriedigung],⁶⁵¹ a satisfaction that relates to the specific questions of knowledge that belong to a certain form of human existence as it appears in a certain time. This does not mean that we cannot have an infinitely valid insight into the speculative logic and the method of pure thinking, and I think this is the only universal claim that Hegel makes. Furthermore, since Hegel thinks philosophy should strive for a totality in its consideration of human experience, the satisfaction that philosophy offers is in principle non-provincial. It is cosmopolitan in a way that does not impose an ideal of knowledge and action from the outside, but rather lets the conflicts expressing themselves in human existence be the guide to deeper self-knowledge.

651 Hegel, G.W.F.: V 10:53: "Das ist dieser Grundsatz, daß das Widersprechende nicht sei, dann auch, daß nichts Widersprechendes gedacht werden könne, aber gerade das ist hier der Fall, wir denken Widersprechendes in Einem; diese ausschließenden Bestimmungen sind in Einem. Diskretion und Kontinuität kommen dem Raum, Zeit, Materie zu, und indem solches Entgegengesetzte Einem zukommt, so ist Widerspruch; dieser fällt nur in den Geist, sagt Kant, nicht in die Welt; diese kann sich nicht widersprechen, aber wie können wir uns widersprechen, als ob der Geist nichts Höheres wäre als die Natur. Der Widerspruch ist dies, sich ebenso immer aufzulösen, aber ebenso immer zu entstehen; aller Trieb, Verlangen, Wollen des Geistes ist Widerspruch, ich habe ein Bedürfnis, ich bin und habe ein Bedürfnis, das ist Negation und insofern Widerspruch; alles Tun ist dann wieder diesen Widerspruch aufzulösen, den Frieden wiederherzustellen; Befriedigung, das ist [die] Auflösung des Widerspruchs: Das Tote enthält diesen Widerspruch nicht."

9.6 Summary

The doctrine of the concept is the fulfillment of Hegel's logic. As the concept develops into the idea it turns into the structure of the dialectical method, which is the completed framework of determination that is in accordance with the way Hegel conceives of philosophical knowledge. As I have argued, Hegel's doctrine of the concept involves a challenge to the traditional doctrine, something which Hegel is very much aware of. When developing his doctrine of the concept, Hegel builds on certain ideas found in Kant, which he thinks Kant has not developed far enough, mainly because of the subjectivism inherent in his critical philosophy. For Hegel, the concept in its pure logical form contains objectivity in it. It is not, as in Kant, a correlate to intuition, which gives it singularity and therefore complete determinacy, but rather it is the form of singularity as such. This singularity is, to use the terminology of transcendental philosophy, the condition of the possibility of knowledge; only insofar as something is treated according to the concept, in its full development from being through essence to itself, can something be known. Concretely, this means that when we study an object philosophically, we do not stop with a set of true sentences about the object. Rather we study the whole process involved in having this object as an object before us. Philosophy therefore is self-reflective. Ultimately it aims at uncovering the development that makes self-knowledge possible and manifesting this knowledge as a comprehensive whole.

The challenge to the traditional doctrine that is most closely related to the speculative determinate negation is that of the reversal of the content and extension of concepts. Hegel only claims that the *speculative determinate negation* is a higher and richer concept. He does not claim that the traditional order must be reversed in all instances. As Hegel does not think philosophy should try to influence the established methods of mathematics and empirical sciences, he is not committed to the view that the way pure, logical, i.e. philosophical concepts are conceived within a science of logic should influence the way we understand mathematical and empirical concepts. In addition, as I have tried to make clear, Hegel only refers to the traditional doctrine in order to make it clear how different his own doctrine is. He does not treat concepts as a sum of markers, but as a developmental movement of pure immediacy that lies beyond the opposition of consciousness. This is a way of knowledge that resembles Kant's notion of an intuitive understanding, in which lower concepts are contained in higher ones, resulting in a contradiction when considered according to the standards of discursive understanding. As far as the speculative unification of opposites goes, I have suggested that Hegel conceives of a new way to understand the way in which a higher concept

can contain a lower in it. He does this by introducing the notion of ideality, and, furthermore, since he is not “afraid” of contradiction, but rather offers a way to understand contradictions as unavoidable on the level of pure thinking, he does not have to defend his own doctrine against the standards of the traditional one.

It is at the end of the logic that Hegel presents his own version of the unity of theoretical and practical knowledge, a unity that had been sought by the German idealists after Kant had separated them in order to disentangle practical philosophy from theoretical concerns. Hegel also finds deep and unresolvable problems within theoretical knowledge. These problems arise due to the presupposition of the separation of the object and the knowing subject. Hegel points out how practical knowledge remedies this through understanding subjectivity inherently in connection with objectivity. Earlier, Hegel had criticized Fichte for not being able to establish a unity of practical and theoretical philosophy, since he ended with infinite striving. Hegel goes beyond Fichte by *accepting* infinite striving, but at the same time not positing anything, e.g. an ideal state, heaven, where the striving ends; the speculative satisfaction comes through the recognition that the infinite striving is only the negative side of rational action, and that we can indeed both affirm that we want to reach our goals and that there is no end to action; we recognize the process of realization itself as “the kingdom of God.” What we should look for in our actions is what realizes itself through them in a way that is not immediately clear to our finite perspectives; that which realizes itself through these actions is connected to the infinite sustainment and renewal of free, rational action. As long as we can identify with this process that is hidden from the view of our finite perspective, we are also liberated from the negativity of the infinite striving.

Hegel’s approach to the unity of theoretical and practical knowledge is based on making self-knowledge into objectivity as such, which is the task of philosophy to uncover in its truth. Ultimate philosophical knowledge is theoretical because it directs itself towards what the structure of this knowledge is, but it is also practical since it is us who supply the material (the determinations of pure thinking) that this structure appears through. Furthermore, the becoming of the structure of knowledge through our own creations is a becoming that we, as thinking beings, undergo ourselves. Philosophy in this form is the investigation of our own practice of self-knowledge. In its pure form, this knowledge takes the shape of the method. This method is one that involves negativity in the sense of a dissolution of the rigid forms of the understanding, forms which then enter into a speculative unity at the point where the tension between them, in the form of contradiction, is at its strongest. This is a

turning point where either a state of nothingness or neutrality could leave us with an *Aufbruch*, but which, through the notion of the speculative determinate negation, instead enters into a positive new stage where the initial determinations are revealed in an ever increasing degree of truth, until the structure of truth itself, which is the same as the method, is revealed.

I have tried to construct a case for how Hegel can argue that the process of philosophical knowledge as he conceives it can claim to be immanent and necessary in a way that reaches totality. The immanence comes through the notion of the reversal of determinations, which leads us into a contradiction, and presents us with the option of leaving the matter unresolved, i.e. with an indeterminacy, or of going deeper into what is actually being revealed through the reversals. Since the reversals really consist of the same movement we only need to bring our thoughts together in order to realize that they are abstractions from a speculative unity that is the "condition of possibility" of the movement. Since this way of conceiving philosophical knowledge also covers both the sides of an opposition as well as their unity it can lay claim to reaching totality on a general level, and on the more detailed level insofar as the general level grows out of and covers the detailed level.

Conclusion

It only remains now to give an overview of the results as they relate to the determinate negation. We have encountered different forms of the determinate negation, which can be ordered in the way I specify below. The sequential ordering of the different forms is not arbitrary – as it will become clear after the overview, I believe that the forms, when presented in the order below, correspond to different stages of philosophical knowledge as presented by Hegel.

10.1 The Three Forms of the Determinate Negation

DN₀: Material Incompatibility

As I indicated in the beginning, this is the form of the determinate negation that most strongly puts the emphasis on exclusion. Through the investigation of the different forms of the determinate negation in Hegel's work, I believe this interpretation of the determinate negation is misleading even if we take into consideration that Hegel himself is not fully consistent in his use of the term. Rather than indicating that we are dealing with a robust relation of *exclusion*, the determinate negation is used by Hegel in instances where something that appears to be an illusory, derived reality – a negation – is in fact itself determinate. It is itself determinate even though it is determined in relation to something else (DN₁), includes the other in itself (DN₂) or is a unity of opposed determinations (DN₃).

DN₁: The Determinate Negation of the Doctrine of Being

This form of the determinate negation lies closest to Brandom's use of the term. The first instance of it is found in the Jena-manuscript, where *Genus* – human life – is taken as a negation of the theoretical I, a negation that is itself determinate through containing an opposition in itself, and is therefore not reducible to any other object of the theoretical I. The theoretical I later moves into a unity with human life and becomes absolute spirit (as described in detail in 4.2.3). The main point of this form of the determinate negation is to emphasize that a negative opposite to something determinate can itself be determinate, and substantially independent of the positive that it is a negative of; it is (a) a negation that has a positive reality of its own and (b) a

negation with content (not just the empty form of an *Anstoß* posited by the theoretical I).

This form of the determinate negation is also identifiable with the determinate negation that concerns determinations such as coldness and darkness (see 7.4.2). Hegel criticizes Kant's notion of *nihil privativum*, claiming that certain negative determinations, which have traditionally been understood as a lack of reality, are, although negations, still determinate, having a reality of their own. The characteristics of this determinate negation are that it is (a) a negative that is positive in that it exhibits a reality and (b) has content of its own; coldness and darkness are specific qualities, i.e. not just lack of any quality or further determination. However, the negative and positive determinations are at this point taken as determinations that exclude each other (examples are heat and light vs. coldness and darkness). Consequently, the emphasis is on the determinate negation as one side of an opposed pair. Specifically, it is not like the *speculative* determinate negation, a unity of opposites (see DN₃ below).

DN₂: The Determinate Negation of the Doctrine of Essence

This form of the determinate negation is the one that is referred to at the beginning of the doctrine of essence in *WdL* (see 8.2). The point Hegel makes by using it is that the logical determination of essence, as a negation of being, is a new concept or determination that results from and includes being as a part of itself – it can therefore be said that it is a negation with content, something it has in common with DN₁ (characteristic (b)), but it is also (c) a negation that contains that from which it results (in the following I continue the enumeration of the different characteristics of the different forms of the determinate negation as started above). Furthermore, it is, obviously, (d) a new concept. Essence is, however, not a unity of opposites; it is a determination that (e) includes its opposite in it, not a new concept that unities a preceding determination with an opposite of the preceding determination. No point is made about being also containing essence as a part of itself. However, it is unclear if the determinate negation here is a higher and richer concept; it is richer perhaps, in that it includes the preceding determination while itself being more than it, but a higher concept is a genus – and what would essence be the genus of? Rather it seems that – insofar as we can make use of the characteristics of “higher” and “lower” at all when describing Hegel's understanding of concepts – being and essence would be species of the concept, which is then the higher and richer concept in relation to the pair of being and essence (see 9.1). In any case, this form of the determinate negation is a neither speculative determinate negation (which is a unity of opposed determinations) nor

a determinate negation that puts emphasis on a negation, though seemingly an absence of reality (DN₁), being itself determinate. As a negation that includes its origin in itself without being a unity of opposites, it is rather a specific form of the determinate negation that exhibits the movement of the logic of essence.

As essence contains a series of positive determinations, and is therefore a new form of dialectics (the movement of reflection), we can also assign to it the characteristic of being a negation that is just as much positive as it is negative (= (a) of DN₁).

There are also good reasons to say that the determinate negation referred to in the *SII* philosophy of nature – that which is referred to positively as body or *Gestalt* (4.2.5) – is an instance of a determinate negation representative of essence. As I indicated in my earlier interpretation, it is a negation that is just as much positive, and also clearly a negation with content, a new concept that is the result of a process that contains that from which it results in it, and it includes its opposite in it (characteristics (a)–(e)).

***DN₃: The Determinate Negation of the Doctrine of the
Concept, the Speculative Determinate Negation***

The speculative determinate negation is the one richest in content. It plays a key role in Hegel's method. Hegel refers to it twice; in the introduction to *PhG*, which was treated in 4.3, and in *WdL*. An overview of its usage was given in Chapter 6 and expanded upon, particularly in Chapters 8 and 9.

The determinate negation in *PhG* is closely connected to the challenge of ancient skepticism and its threat of moving any philosophical search for truth into a state of indeterminacy due to equipollence. Hegel conceives of this nothingness as a nothingness that is a determinate negation, a nothingness or negation that – and this overlaps with characteristic (b) of DN₁ and DN₂ above – has content (a new shape of consciousness,) because it is the true result of a preceding process (= (c) of DN₂),⁶⁵² and through which (f) the complete series of the shapes of consciousness arises. Implicitly it is also a new concept (= (d) of DN₂) and, since it is not a pure nothingness but rather a specific new shape of consciousness that arises out of negativity, it can be said to be a negative that is just as much positive (= (a) of DN₁ and DN₂).

The speculative determinate negation of *WdL* is, as was uncovered in the close analysis of the passage in which it appeared (6.2), a negation that is just

⁶⁵² Hegel does not explicitly state this in the passage in *PhG* where the determinate negation appears, but “true result of a preceding process” is close enough to “contain in it that from which it results” to identify them. Anything true in Hegel is always the result of a process and contains what it resulted from in it.

as much positive (=a) of DN₁ and DN₂), a negation with content (=b) of DN₁ and DN₂), a result containing that from which it results (=c) of DN₁ and DN₂), a new concept, (=d) of DN₁ and DN₂), and through which the system of concepts develops itself immanently (=f) of the determinate negation described in *PhG*). Furthermore, the speculative determinate negation of *WdL* is (g) a negation or self-contradiction that resolves, not into zero or all negation, but into a negation of the particular content of the self-contradictory, or “the determinate matter,” (h) a concept that is higher and richer than the preceding one, and, lastly, (i) a unity of a preceding determination and its opposite.

The main differences between DN₂ and DN₃ are that the former is mainly *one* side of an opposition, while the latter is mainly a unity of two preceding oppositions, and DN₂ is not a higher and richer concept in relation to the preceding determinations. However, since essence is *part* of the process that leads to the final totality of the object in question (the reflection of determinations into each other, but not their speculative unity) and this process consists of a series of self-contradictions, characteristics (e) and (g) of DN₃ can be said to be partially representative for DN₂ (all of this is summed up in the table in 10.2).

The reason why the determinate negation of *PhG* and the speculative determinate negation of *WdL* can be identified with each other is that they come in as an answer to the “nothingness” that arises when two opposed determinations or shapes of consciousness develop into each other. This determinate negation is an answer to the necessary contradiction that Hegel finds to be inherent in the procedure of philosophical knowledge (characteristic (g)). Hegel does not, however, explicitly describe the determinate negation of *PhG* in this way, but it can be gathered from studying the experience of consciousness (see 6.2 [10]). Furthermore, Hegel clearly believes that the method of *PhG* is the same as that of *WdL*.⁶⁵³ This gives us reason to believe that the characteristics of the speculative determinate negation of *WdL* as (g) a higher and richer concept than the preceding and (i) a unity of opposites, also apply to the determinate negation of *PhG*, although Hegel does not explicitly state this. It would have to be shown in each instance when opposites arise in *PhG*, but this is also true for *WdL*, and it is not in all cases easy to state exactly how a determination is a unity of opposites. However, we can indeed find examples of unities of opposites in *PhG*,⁶⁵⁴ and since absolute knowledge contains the process of its

653 TWA 5:49=GW 21:37: “Ich habe in der *Phänomenologie des Geistes* ein Beispiel von dieser Methode an einem konkreteren Gegenstande, an dem Bewußtsein, aufgestellt.”

654 Again, see 6.2 [10] and for instance TWA 3:178=GW 9/132: “Das Bewußtsein geht in dem Gedanken, welchen es erfaßt hat, daß das *einzelne* Bewußtsein *an sich* absolutes Wesen ist, in sich selbst zurück. Für das unglückliche Bewußtsein ist das *Ansichsein* das *Jenseits*

own becoming in it, we have reason to understand the whole process of the method as leading to a determination that is “higher and richer” than the preceding.

Characteristics (f) and (g) apply to DN_2 , but only partially. Essence is a part of the process that leads to totality, but does not itself exhibit the nature of the totality in the way the concept does. The same goes for DN_2 as *Gestalt*, since this determination is part of a process that brings nature to its end in organic life, which contains the previous stages in it. However, to answer how far this corresponds the idea of totality found in *PhG* and *WdL* would require further investigation, and I will not attempt that here.

In 6.3 I gave a list of all the issues and problems that have to be answered in order to give a comprehensive account of what the speculative determinate negation is. We are now in a position to give a summary of this. There are three main issues or problems that were raised (issue three being a list of characteristics that Hegel neither explains the significance of nor describes in any detail): 1. How exactly can something negative be positive? 2. What is meant by “self-contradictory,” in particular as something that resolves into a concrete negation? 3. What is the meaning of the determinate negation as a result containing that from which it results, a new concept, a negation with content, a concept that is higher and richer than the preceding, as one side of an opposition, and as a unity of opposites? 4. How does the determinate negation relate to the immanence, necessity and self-motion of the method? I will now turn to each in turn.

Something negative is positive in the following sense: The negative is that which the positive was supposed to be. This becomes apparent through a dialectical process. The initial positive is supposed to be something independent,

seiner selbst. Aber seine Bewegung hat dies an ihm vollbracht, die Einzelheit in ihrer vollständigen Entwicklung oder die Einzelheit, die *wirkliches Bewußtsein* ist, als das *Negative* seiner selbst, nämlich als das *gegenständliche* Extrem gesetzt oder sein Fürsichsein aus sich hinausgerungen und es zum Sein gemacht zu haben; darin ist für es auch seine *Einheit* mit diesem Allgemeinen geworden, welche für uns, da das aufgehobene Einzelne das Allgemeine ist, nicht mehr außer ihm fällt und, da das Bewußtsein in dieser seiner Negativität sich selbst erhält, an ihm als solchem sein Wesen ist. Seine Wahrheit ist dasjenige, welches in dem Schlusse, worin die Extreme absolut auseinandergehalten auftraten, als die Mitte erscheint, welche es dem unwandelbaren Bewußtsein ausspricht, daß das Einzelne auf sich Verzicht getan, und dem Einzelnen, daß das Unwandelbare kein Extrem mehr für es, sondern mit ihm versöhnt ist. Diese Mitte ist die beide unmittelbar wissende und sie beziehende Einheit, und das Bewußtsein ihrer Einheit, welche sie dem Bewußtsein und damit *sich selbst* ausspricht, die Gewißheit, alle Wahrheit zu sein.”

self-subsisting, which it is only by being the negative of the negative, which means that it is really dependent on its other. The negative, however, is that which establishes the positive as positive, it is inherent in its opposite, and is therefore that which is truly independent and self-subsistent (see 8.3.2). In the context of the speculative method, I think this means that the second negation of the dialectical process (9.4.2) that leads up to the determinate negation, i.e. the speculative unity, is the only real positive. It is that which subsists in and contains the movement of its own becoming and therefore is the *true*, speculative positive that arises from the turning point in the dialectical process.

The “self-contradiction” of a determination is its dialectical reversal, which, in its continuation, is also the self-contradiction of the opposite determinate negation. This contradiction Hegel understands not as a contradiction that resolves into an abstract negation (see 8.5.2), which is neither a state of zero (neutrality) – as is the result when two predicates of a real opposition meet in the same subject – nor all negation, i.e. limitless reality (which for Hegel is equal to nothingness and not reality as such⁶⁵⁵). Rather it is a contradiction that is concrete, negating the particular content of the self-contradictory and the determinate thing; the first form in which a determination appears disappears, but through the disappearance itself a new form arises.

This form is the new concept, which takes the process of its own becoming as its content (see 9.4.2). This concept is higher and richer. Though “higher” and “richer” are terms that do not really belong to Hegel’s logic, one can use them to *indicate* the way concepts are to be understood in it: A higher concept in Hegel’s logic contains the lower concepts *in* it, not under it, as a resolved contradiction. All particular concepts are, when considered by themselves, abstractions from the higher concept. As described in 9.2.5, this is Hegel’s appropriation of Kant’s notion of an intuitive understanding. However, Hegel thinks that this way of understanding can only be applied to pure thinking, and he therefore avoids making any extraordinary claims of knowing things as they are in themselves (see 1.3.3). I have in various instances shown that there is an apparent conflict between the speculative unity of opposites (the speculative determinate negation) and the non-unity of opposites that is itself opposed to the unity of opposites. The principle of speculation seems impossible to fulfill, but, as I have argued (in 7.3.4, 8.4.2, and 9.5.3), this leads to a thoroughly processual understanding of the movement of pure thinking, which is arguably

655 As is clear from the remark to the determination *quality* in *WdL*, see TWA 5:119 ff.=GW 21:99 ff.

the most distinct characteristic of Hegel's philosophy in relation to Fichte and Schelling (see 4.1).

The immanence, necessity and totality of the method, as elaborated in 9.5, relates to the determinate negation in the sense that it makes it possible for the process to move through a point of negativity. What is needed in order to proceed is to take a step back, consider the whole movement, and "bring our thoughts together" (see 9.5.2 for further thoughts on the necessity of the process). When we do this we also get the totality of the forms, i.e. the first immediate, its opposite and their determinate negation in the form of a speculative unity.

10.2 Summary of the Three Forms of the Determinate Negation

The characteristics of the different forms of the determinate negation are summarized in the table below (see my treatment of DN_3 above for details about how I believe the characteristics of the speculative determinate negation of *PhG* are "arguably" applicable to it).

The characteristics (d)–(i) refer to an immanently developing process of determination, which is the major difference between DN_1 and DN_3 . DN_2 stands between these two as the moment where an initial determination reflects into (becomes) another, but is not (yet) at the stage of the process where opposites become unified.

It should be easy to recognize that the different forms of the determinate negation represent different stages of the dialectical process. At first an initial positive determination stands in opposition to another that is negative, but is still itself determinate and inherently positive. Then the opposite is shown to contain the initial determination in itself – which is particularly clear in the context of the determinations of reflection, but also in the context of being and the concept as far as these are determined through the determinations of reflection. Finally, a speculative unity appears, negating the whole process of reflection. In such a way that it is contained in this unity.

The determinate negation in the form of material incompatibility is not representative of Hegel's logic, but the kind of logic Hegel wants to treat scientifically and thereby also changes it fundamentally. "Material incompatibility" as relations of strong exclusion is representative of the logic of the understanding, not of reason. If there is anything like a "master concept" in Hegel's philosophy, it is the concept itself, in particular in the form of the dialectical method. The determinate negation is perhaps the most important conceptual tool *within* this method, and it is impossible to understand the method without

	DN ₁		DN ₂		DN ₃	
	<i>Genus/ human life (4.2.3)</i>	<i>“Kälte, Finsternis und dergleichen bestimmte Negationen” (7.4.2)</i>	<i>Body/ Gestalt (4.2.4)</i>	<i>Essence as a determinate negation (8.2)</i>	<i>PhG (4.3)</i>	<i>WdL (6.2)</i>
<i>Characteristic</i>						
(a) A negation that is just as much positive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(b) A negation with content	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(c) A result of a process that contains that from which it results	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(d) A new concept resulting from a preceding process	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
(e) Includes its opposite in it	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
(f) Leads immanently to totality	No	No	Arguably partially	Partially	Yes	Yes
(g) Results from a self-contradiction that resolves into a concrete negation	No	No	Arguably partially	Partially	Arguably	Yes
(h) A higher and richer concept than the preceding	No	No	No	No	Arguably	Yes
(i) A unity of opposites	No	No	No	No	Arguably	Yes

getting a grasp of the meaning of the determinate negation, but we cannot understand the method through this term alone – Hegel uses the term in different senses, and we can only differentiate and explain the different uses insofar as we understand the whole of the movement of the concept. Furthermore, since each form of the determinate negation corresponds respectively to the different sphere of the logic (being (DN₁), essence (DN₂), concept (DN₃)), and that the progression in each sphere represents, respectively, “*Übergehen in ein Anderes*,” “*Scheinen in dem Entgegengesetzten*” and “*Entwicklung*,” we can say that DN₁ corresponds to the movement of transition from something to other, DN₂ to “reflection in another,” and DN₃ to a fully developmental movement.⁶⁵⁶ This concludes the investigation of the term “determinate negation” in Hegel’s philosophy.

It should be clear by now that the inconsistencies pointed out in the introduction can be explained by there being different forms of the determinate negation. Furthermore, I do not think it is fruitful to try to identify *one exclusive* “basic operator” in Hegel’s thinking, such as Dieter Henrich has done.⁶⁵⁷ If there is anything specific to Hegel’s thinking it is the whole of the method, in which one can identify different points of transitions or “basic operations”; a full account of Hegel’s thinking requires that all of these are taken into consideration in their relation to each other. In particular, Henrich underplays the *positive*, speculative, aspect of Hegel’s thinking, which is still often disregarded today, e.g. in Brandom’s work. Also, Anton Koch’s work on negation in Hegel’s philosophy, which builds on and deepens Henrich’s, does not go into the significance of negation in relation to the positive, speculative moment.⁶⁵⁸ Understanding Hegel’s logic as a self-relating and self-determining negation is at most half of the story. By paying attention to the positive aspect of negation in Hegel’s philosophy I hope to have made a contribution to the research, beyond giving a comprehensive account of the different forms of the determinate negation in Hegel’s philosophy.

656 See TWA 8:391=Enz. § 240, where the progression of the movement of pure thinking is described as transition and reflection in another, and TWA 8:308=Enz. § 161 for the contrast of these two forms to that of the progression of the concept, i.e. the developmental progression. See also Schäfer, Rainer: *Die Dialektik und ihre besonderen Formen in Hegels Logik*, Hamburg: Meiner, 2001, for an in-depth study of these three forms of dialectical progression.

657 Henrich, Dieter: “Hegels Grundoperation,” in: *Der Idealismus und seine Gegenwart*. Ute Guzzoni, Bernhard Rang, Ludwig Siep (eds.), Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1979, pp. 208–230.

658 See Koch, Anton Friedrich: “Die Selbstbeziehung der Negation in Hegels Logik,” in: *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 53(1), 1999, 1–29.

10.3 Hegel's Response to Fichte and Schelling on the Methodical Foundations of Philosophy

I will now turn to how Hegel develops his own ideas in response to Fichte and Schelling and at the same time goes beyond the transcendental framework that was defining for, in particular, Fichte, but also Schelling's early work. I have already given a summary of the results with regards to the determinate negation as such, so here I present what I take to be Hegel's distinct voice in relation to the other philosophical endeavors of his time.

Through his deep reflection on the impact of the distinction between intuition and the understanding, and through the introduction of kinds of opposition other than the logical one, Kant had changed the rules of determination and thereby also the whole playing field of philosophy. Basically, Kant changed the way one thinks of oppositions in relation to determination; one always has to consider whether one is dealing with logical, real or dialectical oppositions. If we are dealing with logical oppositions, we determine through adding a predicate that excludes the opposite predicate. If we are dealing with real oppositions, we must consider the interaction of opposed determinations and the ensuing result. However, if we are dealing with dialectical oppositions, we have to take a modest stance: Either we deny two opposed predicates of the subject, which leaves the subject itself indeterminate, or we affirm both predicates, and then we have to follow up with an account of how something opposed can subsist in the same subject, which is also to give an account of the *unity* of the opposed. If we cannot give such an account, we are left with indeterminacy in the form of an unresolved contradiction or a dogmatic insistence that the opposed pair can subsist in the same subject in a way that we do not fully understand. Kant welcomes the indeterminacy that results from his investigation into the dialectical illusions of pure reason, restricting the field of human inquiry on behalf of practical reason and the possibility of faith. But this comes at a high price: After the critiques, Kant's philosophy is left with an overall disunity, which also leaves it open to skeptical attacks.

As I have argued, Kant himself had a conception of philosophical knowledge that warrants overall unity. He also had certain ideas about unity and knowledge that he did not develop fully or which he only assigned a regulative role. These ideas could have had a positive impact on the unity of his philosophy and thereby provide a reply to the skeptic (I am thinking here of the unity of opposed categories in a third and the intuitive understanding, which understands the parts from the standpoint of the whole). Of importance is also the notion that opposed determinations can relate to each other and meet in the same subject without contradiction, as well as the notion that knowledge

can be processual, moving from an initial unity, to differentiation and back to unity again (see 2.4.3). In fact, if we draw on all of these ideas we come very close to Hegel's method for philosophical knowledge, which follows the same sequence, but informed by a notion of speculation that unifies opposites in a new determination by providing a view of the whole; not by avoiding contradiction, but by understanding it as an integral part of the process that brings the unity of the whole into view through the speculative determinate negation. It is doubtful, however, whether Hegel's response to Kant, in particular his development of the dialectical method as a new approach to philosophical knowledge, would have come to maturity without Hegel first having to come to terms with Fichte's and Schelling's ideas about what philosophy should look like after Kant.

The skeptical reaction to Kant that was most significant for Fichte was *Anesidemus*, which attacked Reinhold's attempt at providing a systematic foundation of Kant's transcendental philosophy based on a first principle from which the rest of the system is derived, thus providing an overall unity to it and overcoming any seeming dualities. In Fichte's review of *Anesidemus*, he largely agrees with the skeptical objections to the notion of a having a single first principle as the foundation of philosophy, and announces that he has conceived of a fundamentally new way of thinking about this. With the notion of the *Tathandlung*, Fichte puts the actively self-positing I in the place previously reserved for a calm and unambiguous first principle – the I does not only posit itself, but also, through its self-positing, also posits its opposite, the not-I. In itself, the *Tathandlung* is a pure act, conceived through the intellectual intuition that underlies all other forms of activity. By making this his first principle Fichte has found a secure ground for an overarching unification of theoretical and practical philosophy. Furthermore, the *Tathandlung* is not simply posited as the beginning of philosophical knowledge, but is reached through a process of reflection on the conditions of consciousness. When the *Tathandlung* is reached, however, a process of dialectics starts. It begins with the positing of mutually determining determinations of theoretical philosophy, and then moves on to practical philosophy. The shape of this process already represents the groundwork of a new approach to the method of philosophical knowledge – it starts with the most abstract, universal determination, which then separates into opposing determinations that mutually determine each other while expanding into a totality. However, what both Schelling and Hegel found lacking was Fichte's exclusively *transcendental* perspective on philosophy and the related remnant resistance of the non-I in practical philosophy, which blocked the full return to the original *Tathandlung*, and therefore in the end did not bring Fichte far beyond Kantian dualism.

Schelling proposes to unify transcendental philosophy, i.e. to connect the I with the non-I, through a philosophy of artistic creation, in which unconscious and conscious productive activity meet in the form of moments of inspiration and the intuited works of art. However, Schelling claims that transcendental philosophy is limited since its main task is to explain how subjectivity conditions objectivity; it leaves untouched how objectivity conditions and gives rise to subjectivity in the first place. This is the main task of a philosophy of nature, which Schelling introduces as a necessary complement to transcendental philosophy. Fichte rejects the whole notion of a philosophy of nature since he thinks we cannot escape the finitude of human consciousness and perform any genetic reconstruction of the development of subjectivity out of nature from the perspective beyond finite consciousness, i.e. from the perspective of the absolute. The debate between Fichte and Schelling comes to a halt on the topic of the absolute. In fact, both seem to *agree* that the human being as such does not have access to it as such.

Schelling in particular struggles with finding the appropriate methodical foundation for his philosophy of nature. It would require us to abstract from all the subjective influences we exert on the process of knowledge, and find some way to connect with objectivity as such. Schelling finds what he needs in the pure intellectual intuition of the I. If we focus on the purely objective component of the intellectual intuition, which in itself is an identity of the subject and the object, then we have reached rock bottom with regards to the process of knowledge of nature; we have objectivity in its pure form before ourselves. But where do we go from here? How do we go from pure objectivity to the intricate and abundant forms of nature, and how do we explain how consciousness and subjectivity arises from this? Schelling, inspired by and drawing on Spinoza's geometrical method, thinks we can go about this through a process of deduction; through positing first principles, and proceeding through propositions and proof. Remarkably, Schelling seems oblivious to the skeptical threat that had originally troubled Fichte. Soon Schelling also begins to doubt that philosophy can in fact reach the absolute ground of knowledge through an act of intellectual intuition; we seek the absolute, but the absolute as the indifferent, original unity of thinking and being is made into something it is not when it is thought, since thinking implies making distinctions – indeed, when we think of the absolute as the indifference beyond all distinctions and oppositions, this idea *itself* is distinguished from and opposed to that which is absolutely without distinction and opposition. It seems impossible not to get entangled in the net of reflection, and silence seems to be the only option when we ask reason to give us an adequate expression of the absolute. Schelling explored the idea of finding a point of

indifference between thinking and being, which would provide a final unity to his system of philosophy, but since this point of indifference either would be inexpressible or inadequately expressible through reflection it was not only unable to account for the final unity, but also made the whole endeavor a non-starter.

Hegel begins his response to Fichte and Schelling on the methodical foundations of transcendental philosophy with the *Differenzschrift*. It ends with the publication of *PhG*. Many aspects of this response builds on ideas already found in Fichte and Schelling, but Hegel not only gives these ideas a unique twist, he also puts them into work within his own overall conception of how philosophy should be done. Furthermore, he executes this conception with consistency and a steadily increasing level of clarity. From Fichte, Hegel takes the idea that any determination is only as “positively real” as its opposite is “negatively real,” making both of them mutually dependent and reciprocally determining. This again builds on Kant’s doctrine of the real opposition, but Kant had not, like Fichte, approached the conditions of consciousness according to the rules of determination prescribed by this doctrine. However, to be precise, Fichte talks about contradiction in relation to the oppositions of the *wL*, contradictions which are to be overcome; for Kant, real oppositions are specifically oppositions that are not to be considered according to the law of contradiction. Hegel also continues to speak of contradiction in relation to oppositions, though, for him, it is a matter of explaining exactly how oppositions can develop into each other and, through a speculative resolution, become united in a third. Though Fichte and Hegel treat the fundamental determinations of *wL* and *WdL* according to other characteristics of real oppositions, such as one side of an opposition being only as real as the other, Hegel moves beyond the whole question of the conditions of consciousness. Fichte speaks of the I as having just as much reality as its negation, the not-I, has an opposite, “negative” reality. Hegel makes similar points, but bases this on an investigation of the determinations of reality and negation as such, i.e. independently of a reference to an I and a not-I.

From Fichte, Hegel also appropriates the general dialectical procedure of developing a determination through its relation to its opposite before indicating how they reciprocally determine each other. What is lacking in Fichte, however, is a fully developed conception of dialectics and its relation to philosophical speculation, in the sense of positive reason emerging from its negative correlate, which, furthermore, can provide final unity to the system. The conceptual framework for this Hegel develops in the *SII*-manuscript, particularly with his conception of the true infinite (as argued in 4.2.1). Hegel follows Fichte’s aim of unifying theoretical and practical philosophy, but is not satisfied with having an infinite practical striving as the end point of philosophy. The deeper reason

for this is, I believe, that Hegel cannot come to terms with the limitations posed by transcendental philosophy. Hegel demands an even deeper, critical, self-examination of reason than the one found in Kant's critiques. Whenever we find ourselves caught in a fixed opposition between opposites, such as the one between appearances and things in themselves, we must investigate whether we are not still under the influence of a form of illusion posed by a specific form of conceiving. If we do not, our philosophy will be determined by our own failure to not thoroughly and critically investigate reason.

It could seem unavoidable that we will have to posit fixed oppositions when doing philosophy since any determinate thought at all begins with the exclusion of an opposite. Hegel's answer to this is to embrace the dilemma; neither can we help drawing abstract distinctions when thinking, distinctions which bring us only one side of a whole into view and therefore lead us astray, nor can we stop making such distinctions. This is the basis of Hegel's response to Schelling, which claims that we cannot stop reflecting if we seek determinate philosophical knowledge beyond mimicking some silent absolute. In order to do this, we must reflect deeply on the relationship between oppositions and open up the possibility of speculative unification in a way that challenges *all* of our most fundamental philosophical distinctions and concepts (such as the distinction between intuition and the understanding and the concept of the absolute). Hegel therefore draws on methodical insights in Fichte to give an answer to Schelling and also Fichte.

In Hegel's Jena-philosophy this has the consequence that the role of the not-I in relation to the I as such is reflected on and integrated into the process of self-knowledge of humanity. Later on, Hegel develops a critical account of the determinations of appearance and reality (the thing in itself) where these are dialectically conceived. This means that appearance itself is what gives definiteness to reality; in a sense appearance is the reality of reality. According to this dialectic, we cannot speak of appearances without having some determinate conception of their underlying reality and the connection between the two. But transcendental philosophy cannot give us such an account. No philosopher can give such an account on the terms of transcendental philosophy. What Hegel has to offer, however, is a new way to understand what the proper object of philosophical inquiry is, based on a speculative reconception of the relationship between appearance and reality. The proper object of philosophy he has in mind is not how appearances in consciousness and a posited reality beyond consciousness come together to form knowledge. Rather, the proper object is *such an (inadequate) conception of knowledge itself*, and, furthermore, *knowledge as the whole developing out of inadequate conceptions of knowledge*. When dealing with such objects, we are dealing with

our own creations, and therefore the worry about the thing in itself falls away (the form of consciousness that worries about it, skepticism, becomes, as I argued in 4.3.2, integrated into Hegel's conception of philosophy both as a shape of consciousness and as an aspect of the method of this philosophy).

All of this does not mean, however, that we can no longer make use of determinations such as "appearance" and "reality." Since our different conceptions of knowledge are caught in the dialectical reversals inherent in the basic determinations of pure thinking, they present us with not only our errors but also a possibility of a deeper insight into ourselves as cognizers, since these errors are the negative side of reason, from which the positive side can arise immanently, through a determinate negation. The shapes of consciousness are themselves appearances, i.e. they are, as far as we only know their negative aspect, false or erroneous, but as far as we know their positive aspect, they are seen as connected to and in fact a part of the becoming of the whole reality (which is more properly conceived of according to the logic of the concept or the idea). This is the idea behind Hegel's *PhG*, which is Hegel's lengthy response to the skeptic. Following Fichte, Hegel thinks we should not start with first principles in philosophy, but with a process of reflection, which reveals to us the conditions of knowledge on the basis of speculative principles, i.e. ones that are properly conceived of as developmental wholes incorporating opposites in themselves. For Hegel, however, this reflection is not an abstract exercise, but one that spans the whole field of human activity, practical and theoretical. At the end of this process, as a replacement for Fichte's *Thathandlung*, stands Hegel's conception of pure thinking. However, reflection on pure thinking is rather reflection *in* pure thinking and does not lead us to a development of a doctrine of the conditions of finite consciousness, but a system of the pure determination of thinking.

Contrary to Fichte, both Schelling and Hegel develop a philosophy of nature. As I have already indicated, Schelling seeks to abstract from the subjective part of the subject-object that is reached through intellectual intuition, and then, by means of geometrical method, deduce the content of the philosophy of nature. Hegel finds both steps of this approach problematic. First of all, he does not believe intellectual intuition can gain any immediate insight into a subject-object beyond all distinction. This would put philosophy at the mercy of revelation. Furthermore, there is nothing in such an intuition that could provide any material for thinking, particularly not one that proceeds in the way of geometrical method (since it has to start with a principle that is opposed to another, it is already finite, i.e. not representative of the absolute or any point of indifference between thinking and being). Secondly, as we have seen, Hegel does not think that the geometrical method is appropriate for

philosophy. Hegel's critique is that the geometrical method either does not really develop its content immanently or simply presents something that was contained in a foregoing sentence in an obvious matter, making the process of proof superfluous. Furthermore, the first principles are presupposed, something that provides an obvious weakness that the skeptic will exploit (see 6.2[6]-[7]). Still, a critique of the synthetical (geometrical) method is part of Hegel's exposition of theoretical knowledge in *WdL* (as treated in 9.3.1). This is a further example of how Hegel *incorporates* the critical self-investigation of reason into the presentation of his own conception of methodical philosophical knowledge.

Indeed, Hegel has his own version of "deduction" or the specifying development of content out of abstract determinations, which is at the same time an immanent realization of what the original determination has in itself to become. He has not thrown the ideal of a scientific form of philosophy overboard, but has, through a reflection on the shortcomings of the empirical and geometrical methods, found a method that he believes is the proper one for philosophy. The empirical method has shortcomings that are due to the nature of empirical material itself; the classifications of the empirical sciences are contingent since there is a fundamentally contingent relationship between what natural objects appear to be and what they are. Philosophy should not intervene, however, in the process of the empirical sciences. At most it can provide a developmental, or dialectical, framework for an overall rational ordering of its results. This is fundamental to Hegel's philosophy of nature, but I will not enter into further considerations about this here.

In general, Hegel's response to Fichte and Schelling is that neither of them fully freed themselves from the confines of the understanding. They did not go through with the fundamental shift from the perspective of the understanding, where one philosophical position is opposed to another, to a speculative form of knowledge that is concerned with the developmental relationship of the different positions and how truth shows itself through them, finally being revealed as an holistic way of conceiving philosophical knowledge itself.

The logical insight that underlies and makes this approach possible should by now be easily recognizable. This insight was also the one underlying Hegel's more specific response to Schelling. The investigation of the fundamental determinations of pure thinking led Hegel to the critique of the absolute conceived as an undifferentiated beyond, though this critique itself is also incorporated into the gradually developing concept of the concept in the logic. In this way Hegel does not suggest a completely new way of doing philosophy that is in opposition to and should replace previous endeavors of philosophical knowledge; what he does is to suggest a way to recognize how these previous

endeavors have been caught in conceptual traps that are of their own making, resulting from insufficient self-investigation of reason, but from which philosophy can free itself through becoming aware of the movement that lies at the ground of the most basic determinations inherent in philosophical thinking. This liberation does not undo philosophy as such, but sees its seeming failures as part of a process through which truth develops into its proper form, which again provides the possibility of a deeper perspective on the problems that philosophy finds itself entangled in. The problems are not annulled, but rather brought to their proper end, which resolves and completes them.

10.4 Hegel's Response to Kant's Framework of Determination and Negation

We are now in a position to look at the specific points of Hegel's response to Kant's framework of determination and negation. Here is a short summary of Kant's doctrine: The simplest forms of determination and negation in Kant are the affirmative and negative judgment. The affirmative judgment states that a predicate belongs to a subject. A negative judgment denies it (the rose *is* red vs. the rose *is not* red). This would be an empty procedure if we do not take into account the limits of how predicates can be combined in judgments. Some predicates are opposed, which means that including a predicate in a subject can imply excluding others. Furthermore, the affirmative and negative judgment are universally opposed. Affirming that a rose is red means denying that it is not red. Negation and opposition are fundamentally connected with determination; affirming a predicate of a thing at the same time means denying the contradictory opposite of it.

The contradictory opposition is not, however, the only kind of opposition. In order to understand what Kant means by determination and negation it is vital to get a grasp of his other conceptions of opposition. In general, for Kant, an opposition is a relation where something posits what something else cancels.⁶⁵⁹ Furthermore, Kant differentiates between three kinds of oppositions, namely logical (analytical), dialectical and real opposition. Only *logical* oppositions are patently *contradictory*. Logical opposition is understood either as *contradictory predication*, or as two judgments of which one affirms what the other denies. Both are ruled out by Kant's formulation of the law of

659 Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen, AA II:171.

non-contradiction (“Keinem Dinge kommt ein Prädikat zu, welches ihm widerspricht”).⁶⁶⁰

The second kind of opposition, the real opposition, does not bring the law of contradiction into play in this way. A real opposition exists, for instance, between a force and an equal counter-force that are affecting the same object. The force of an object that moves it in one direction may co-exist with another force moving it in the other direction. If the forces involved are equal and directly opposed, the actual result is that the object does not move at all. “Having the force of movement in this direction” and “having the force of movement in the opposite direction” are determinations that do not *contradict* each other, but they still cancel out the consequences of each other, resulting in the object being at rest. A negation, as far as it is a result of a real opposition, is called a *privation* (*Beraubung*) of consequences, and an active form of negation, i.e. deprivation or cancellation, and is to be differentiated from *lack* (*Mangel*), which is the static absence of a determination.⁶⁶¹ As far as a body is in a state of rest, it *lacks movement*, i.e. the predicate *moving* must be denied of it, while *privation* in this case would mean that an object that is moving is brought to rest by a counter-force, and that the object still has moving force, but one that is cancelled out since the consequences of the opposed forces of movement counteract each other.⁶⁶²

The third kind of opposition is the dialectical opposition. The differentiation between logical and real opposition is present already in Kant's pre-critical writings,⁶⁶³ while the notion of dialectical opposition first appears in Kant's critical phase. Dialectical opposition is essentially connected to one of the most central points of Kant's critical project: When reason seeks to expand its knowledge into that which lies beyond appearance it becomes possible to justify contradictory predications of things in themselves (the world as such has a beginning in time/it does not have a beginning in time, substances are simple/composite, etc.). Kant believes this forces us to give up any attempts at a priori knowledge of the noumenal realm. These contradictions are not

660 B 190. Contradictory predication is equivalent to two judgments of which one affirms what the other denies; see Wolff, Michael: *Der Begriff des Widerpruchs. Eine Studie zur Dialekt Kants und Hegels*, Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurt University Press, 2010, p. 41.

661 This differentiation between privative negation and lack seems to be a technical, terminological construction of Kant characteristic of his work on the real opposition. In KrV the privative negation, which is identified with nothing (*nihil privativum*), is also identified with the notion of lack. This then re-establishes the connection with the original Aristotelian conception. See B 347 f.

662 *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, AA II:177 f.

663 *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, AA II:171.

simply logical contradictions that can be resolved through a more thorough investigation of the matter. They arise necessarily when reason extends its reach beyond appearances and teach us important lessons about the nature of human knowledge. In some cases Kant claims that the contradictory statements that make up a dialectical opposition are *both true* (subcontrary), in other cases he claims that they are *both false* (contrary). With the introduction of dialectical opposition the relationship of exclusion between predicates is altered: In the case where both sides of an apparently contradictory pair of predicates are denied of a subject we have to suspend our judgment, which means that we have to leave the subject undetermined with regards to the predicates in question. In the case where both predicates are affirmed, we open up the possibility for a dual-aspect relationship between the predicates.⁶⁶⁴ This is fundamentally a different approach than Hegel's. Hegel sees the dialectical opposition as revealing the *objectivity of contradiction*. In contrast, for Kant, the main difference between logical and dialectical opposition is that *logical oppositions are real contradictions* while *dialectical oppositions are only apparent contradictions* (even though they necessarily arise at a certain point when reasons extends beyond appearances).

10.3.1 *Determination*

At a basic level, Kant's doctrine of determination concerns the act of predication. Of prime concern is the nature of opposition, since to determine means not only to add a predicate to a subject, but also to exclude the opposite predicate. With regards to analytical judgments the opposite is simply the contradictory predicate; when I predicate P of something, I cannot also predicate anything that implies not P. When I determine anything to be P, I also determine that it is not the negation of P. Recall that analytical judgments only concern logical predication, while only synthetical judgments properly concern determination in the sense of an act of determining. An analytical judgment simply states that a predicate is found in the subject itself. It would be a contradiction to deny the predicate of the subject. A synthetical judgment, i.e. a determination, *prima facie* stands in a contradictory relationship to an opposite synthetical judgment, but whether or not the relationship actually is contradictory or not (i.e. contrary or subcontrary) depends on the content of the judgments.

The ground for determination with regards to synthetical judgments can be either a posteriori or a priori. The former finds the ground of determination in the empirical world, which allows us to determine something according to the

664 Compare the footnote to *KrV* B XVIII.

way it happens to be, while the latter leads us into the deeper aspects of transcendental philosophy and the discovery of certain necessary synthetical judgments. The question of the nature of synthetical a priori claims also leads to the question of another kind of opposition, namely the dialectical opposition. Some claims that go beyond the investigation of the conditions of appearance force us to say that neither the one nor the other (contradictory) predicate belongs to the thing (violating the principle of thoroughgoing determination), while others seems to force us to say that both the one and the other contradictory claims belong to the thing in itself (violating the principle of contradiction). In this way, the dialectical opposition bring with it a wholly different framework of determination, a framework that apparently contradicts the basic components of Kant's doctrine of determination as far as it is concerned with predications that imply the exclusion of opposite predicates. Kant's solution to this is his dualism or double aspect theory, coupled with strict epistemological limits with regards to the knowledge of the thing as it is in itself.

For Hegel, affirmations are equally unthinkable or indeterminate on their own as negations are for Kant. Affirmation and negation are determinations that reciprocally constitute each other. *Any* affirmation is also a negation. The presence of an affirmation is equally the absence (negation) of a negation. One could claim that the logical constant \neg only makes sense in relationship to the logical variable p , but the *presence* of any such logical variable also presupposes the *absence* of that which it is not ($\neg p$). Hegel would go even further, and claim that *indeterminacy* also is a form of determinacy, since both indeterminacy and determinacy are negations of each other – one can draw a limit between them, where, on the one hand, there is determinacy, and on the other, indeterminacy. On such an account determinacy would also be indeterminate in a certain way. Since determinacy consists of not being indeterminate, it is impossible to say what determinacy is without making an implicit reference to indeterminacy, which effectively would make indeterminacy part of the essence of determinacy. Both determinacy and indeterminacy seem to be equally confused determinations, changing their meaning as the dialectical consideration proceeds. A way out of this apparent dead end would be to introduce a pre-given determinate content to the universe, which relates to affirmation and negation on a purely logical level, making indeterminacy a product of a negation of any pre-given content. This is the traditional way and is still present in Kant's thinking, in particular in his notion of the transcendental prototypon.

10.3.2 *Negation*

Hegel's response to Kant's general doctrine of determination – thus also a response to traditional metaphysics – consists of a universalization of the

point that all affirmations are also are negations (of their opposites), and understanding this as a dynamical relationship that expresses a whole. This is not a break with Kant, but rather a continuation. Kant's statement that negations cannot be thought if they are not related to an affirmation seems to imply that negations differ from affirmations in that affirmations indeed can be thought without a reference to their negations. Accordingly, one would say that someone who is not blind can conceive of light without having knowledge of darkness. On this account it is clear that Kant would subscribe to the view that there is an asymmetrical relation between negation and affirmation (with affirmation being primary). In general, there is a long tradition for regarding affirmation as more primary than negation.⁶⁶⁵ Contrary to Kant, Hegel is a kind of symmetricalist when it comes to the relationship between affirmation and negation. One of the fundamental insights that Hegel's logic builds on is that all immediacy is equally mediated, and vice versa.⁶⁶⁶ In the dialectic of being and nothing, we start with *being* and proceed to *nothing* and it turns out that they cannot be distinguished, in particular because nothing is not simply indeterminate, but determined as distinct from being, which gives nothing a minimal affirmative being. Negativity for Hegel can also have an *intensity* – which clearly means that negation neither refers to the logical relationship between judgments nor the non-being of the transcendental negation – indeed, negativity in its *highest intensity* is absolute affirmation.⁶⁶⁷ Although Hegel takes a symmetricalist view, affirmation and negation still retain a specific sense of their own within the dialectical method, and it would be more precise to say that Hegel understands affirmation and negation as being in reciprocal relationship where the one cannot be thought without the other. Consequently he would reject a symmetricalist view as far as it involves a claim that affirmation and negation both have a fundamental subsistence of their own.⁶⁶⁸

A symmetricalist view such as Hegel's will bring with it a necessary reconsideration of Kant's claims regarding the blind's ability to conceive of darkness, the poor's ability to conceive of its own poverty, and all such examples. A symmetricalist would say that it is impossible to recognize light without the presence of darkness. Similarly, one would not be able to recognize wealth

665 See Horn, Laurence R.: *A Natural History of Negation*, Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications, 2001, p. 45 ff.

666 TWA 5:66=GW 21:54.

667 TWA 8:187=Enz. § 87.

668 In any case it is more correct to understand Hegel as a symmetricalist than a asymmetricalist, which means that I disagree with Horn's location of Hegel in the asymmetricalist camp. See Horn, Laurence R.: *A Natural History of Negation*, Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications, 2001, p. 46.

without knowledge of poverty. For Hegel, pure light is equal to pure darkness.⁶⁶⁹ However, we do not see pure light, only colors. Would Hegel think that seeing light requires knowledge of darkness? That is hard to say. Maybe the question is too abstract. In fact, Hegel prefers Goethe's theory of colors, where everything we see (colors) are created based on different constellations of light and darkness. This makes Goethe (and Hegel) a symmetricalist when it comes to colors.

According to Paul Redding, Hegel's conception of the determinate negation can be traced back to Aristotle's view that individual substances are "recipients of *contrary qualifications at different times*."⁶⁷⁰ Kant relies on a similar conception in his doctrine of pure intuition in *KrV*, where the determinations come in pairs of front-back, up-down, right-left and future-past. This again can be compared to the Aristotelian term negation.⁶⁷¹ Term negation is privative in the sense that something that normally could apply to something is denied of it – a human can be non-sighted, or blind, because it is something that potentially can see. According to Aristotle, we would neither say of a stone that it is sighted nor that it is non-sighted (blind) – it is simply not sighted.⁶⁷²

It seems to me that the best way to analyze the relationship between term negation and negation is the following: Some predicates stand in an oppositional pair-relationship, others do not. Those that do not, when negated, do not yield anything specific. Pair-relationships, however, are such that the negation of one side of the pair yields the other. Examples of such relationships could be the one between ugly and beautiful. When I say that something is non-ugly, then I know (presupposing I have knowledge of the pair-relationship ugly/beautiful) that it is beautiful. However, when I say of something that it is not ugly, then I do not know anything more about it; it could be either beautiful or not beautiful (but not non-beautiful because that would imply that it is ugly). Similarly, when I say of something that it is not a stone, then I do not know what it is – I would not even know if it were a non-stone, since I do not know of anything that the stone has an oppositional pair-relationship to.

For any object that is neither ugly nor beautiful, it would be improper to say that it is either non-ugly or non-beautiful, but it would not be improper to say that it is not ugly or not beautiful. This is similar to Kant's understanding of the infinite judgment. Infinite judgments concern

669 TWA 8:105=Enz. §36Z.

670 Redding, Paul: *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 96.

671 Ibid., p. 97.

672 *Metaphysics*, 12a26–12b5.

predicate-pairs like beautiful/ugly. The infinite judgment affirms a positive predicate of a thing *in a negative way*. It seems, however, that Kant may allow the infinite judgment to form an arbitrary pair-determination, as when I say that something is a non-stone. Then I know it has a positive determination, but I do not know which one.

It now seems that the sphere of non-stone and of everything that is not a stone is conflated. I can pick out any object that is not a stone, and this would effectively put it in the non-stone sphere. Would picking out one object that is not a stone also in every case mean that I have picked out a non-stone? Only if there is a specific quality of being a non-stone present. Call this non-stoneness. Anything that has this non-stoneness quality is then indeed not a stone, but everything that is not a stone does not have the non-stoneness quality. That this is the case we have seen much clearer with examples of actual pair-determinations. Something good-smelling is not equal to something that does not smell bad. Something that does not smell bad could be something that does not smell at all. Consequently, predicates that do not come in pairs do not work well in infinite judgments. There is no difference between saying that something is a non-stone and saying that it is not a stone if there is no specific non-stone quality that is positively opposed to having stone-quality. For Kant, however, it seems that the infinite judgment in any case will add some amount of determinateness, since for him every object has to have some positive quality.

Hegel's view on the infinite judgment is complex⁶⁷³ and it can be confusing when compared with Kant's doctrine. Although Hegel gives expression to a positive view of the infinite judgment, he also calls it an absurd (*widersinnig*) judgment.⁶⁷⁴ As in Kant, the infinite judgment is a form of predication, and therefore it should locate the subject within the sphere of the predicate. However, it does exactly the opposite. It removes the subject from the sphere of predication. As Hegel explains the meaning of the infinite judgment, it becomes clear he has quite a different understanding of the infinite judgment than Kant. Hegel differentiates between denial and infinite judgment through understanding the latter as concerning judgments that deny something of a subject that is somehow irrelevant to it, for instance when stating that "der Geist ist kein Elephant" – such judgments are correct, but, again, pointless or absurd.⁶⁷⁵ Negative judgments, such as the rose is not red, implies

673 Schmitz, Hermann: *Hegels Logik*, Bouvier Verlag: Bonn, 2007, p. 47 ff. Cf. Brauer, Daniel: "Die Dialektische Natur der Vernunft," in: *Hegel-Studien*, 30, p. 93. Brauer claims that Kant's and Hegel's account of the infinite judgment only have the name in common.

674 TWA 8:324=Enz. § 173.

675 TWA 8:324=Enz. § 173.

for Hegel that the rose has another color.⁶⁷⁶ This deviates from Kant's understanding of denial, which, for him, does not concern the content. As Hegel understands the matter, being colored belongs to the concept of a rose, and this conceptual context suggests that if one says that it is not red – i.e. even when making a normal denying judgment – then it must have another color. Saying that something has a different positive predicate through a denial only works for Kant when making an infinite judgment. For Kant, when denying that the object smells good, one does not imply that the object has any other smell; for Hegel it does.

10.3.3 *Real Opposition*

Recall that for Kant real opposition is a relation between determinations that

- (1) concern the same subject,
- (2) are not contradictory,
- (3) negate each other and not something else,
- (4) are such that at least one of the determinations is affirmative, and
- (5) cancel out the outcome of each other.⁶⁷⁷

How do these criteria fare when we compare them to the oppositions of Hegel's logic? I think we can reconstruct Hegel's position as follows (consider claims (1)–(5) and my suggestion of what would have been Hegel's response):

- (1) *The oppositions of the logic concern the same subject.* This is true. The opposed determinations concern pure thinking as such.
- (2) *The oppositions of the logic are not contradictory.* This is untrue as far as we rely on Hegel's understanding of contradiction. Then all determinations are contradictory (even though the contradiction can be resolved speculatively).
- (3) *The oppositions of the logic negate each other and not something else.* This is true as far as each of the opposition in the logic can be seen to stand in a relationship of mutual dependence. However, the determinations of the oppositions do not only negate each other, they also negate themselves.
- (4) *The oppositions of the logic are such that at least one of the determinations is affirmative.* This is true (being: affirmative, something: affirmative, appearance: affirmative, etc.), but also is trivial, since all determinations (including negative ones) have an affirmative aspect.

⁶⁷⁶ TWA 8:324=Enz. § 172Z.

⁶⁷⁷ *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Größen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, AA 11:176.

- (5) *The oppositions of the logic cancel out the results of each other.* This is true, but in a very specific sense: Two opposed determinations “meet” in a third, speculative determination that unifies the oppositions, which is a result of a process of dialectical determination; this determination is the fulfillment of the self-cancellation of the opposed determination. The result is, however, not a state of neutrality, but a new, speculative determination.

Further differences are that the determinations in Hegel’s logic cannot exist on their own, and that the intensity of a negative determination can be so strong that it turns into its opposite. As far as the determinate negation is understood as a negation that has a content, it does indeed have something in common with a negation in relation to real opposition, in that the latter also does not imply a simple lack of determination. However, as far as the determinate negation is understood in relation to the idea of a unity of opposed determinations, the resemblance becomes only superficial. It could be said that the speculative moment is a neutral state of equilibrium between two extremes, but this then would exclude the positive significance of including the opposed determination within a higher, more concrete, determination.

It is tempting to look for similarities between Kant’s conception of real opposition and Hegel’s conception of the determinate negation. In the context of the speculative determinate negation and the unity of opposites, we have to consider the point that two opposite determinations can enter into a relationship that can be understood according to principles other than the principle of contradiction. The opposed determinations of Hegel’s logic could be seen as consisting of real oppositions, since a negation of one is not simply nothing, but a specific new determination or a negative state. The opposed determinations of Hegel’s logic are privative rather than simple negations of each other in the sense that the one has what the other lacks. Furthermore, it can be said that Hegel’s conception of a speculative *Aufhebung* builds on the notion already found in Kant’s doctrine of real opposition. The difference between the two is that Hegel understands the cancellation fundamentally within the context of dialectical determination, where determinations cancel themselves just as much as they cancel their opposed determination, and that the cancellation does not result in a state of neutrality.

10.3.4 *The Antinomies*

Hegel interprets Kant’s resolution of the antinomies to consist of the claim that the contradiction involved is not in any way objective, it is not an ontological contradiction, but an epistemological one. It does not concern the thing in itself,

but rather reason. Hegel claims that the reason why the contradiction arises is to be found in the categories of the understanding themselves, and that through them contradiction is also introduced into reason. The notion that contradiction is unavoidably brought into reason by the understanding is both “essential and necessary.” Hegel calls it one of the “most important and deep” advancements that has been made in modern philosophy.⁶⁷⁸ However, the solution Kant has to offer, namely that the contradictions are epistemological or concern only the knowing subject is rejected by Hegel, who thinks that such a solution shows too much tenderness for “the world.” Reason, on Hegel’s account, is in no way subordinate to the world or to reality as such. For Hegel, it is no less problematic to say that reason is contradictory than it is to say that the world is contradictory – as far as reason gets entangled in contradictions, so must the world also get entangled.

Hegel also does not share Kant’s view, which is fundamental to transcendental philosophy, that the categories of the understanding are only valid, epistemologically, in relation to possible experience, and must not be applied to the thing in itself. That Hegel rejects this distinction as a fundamental condition at least for *philosophical* knowledge, is one of the most definitive differences between Kant and Hegel. For instance, Hegel claims that the reason why the thing in itself is “unknowable” is that it is an empty or fully abstract thought.⁶⁷⁹ Hegel furthermore makes quite an extraordinary claim when he states he does not believe that there are only four antinomies, but rather that antinomies exists “in all objects of all kinds, in all representations, concepts and ideas.”⁶⁸⁰ For Hegel, the dialectical moment of the logical is inherently antinomical and therefore contradictions can be found wherever one looks into a matter from the perspective of philosophy.

Hegel nonetheless believes that Kant advances further than the old metaphysics since he locates contradiction in thinking itself, i.e. Hegel thinks that Kant does not believe that contradiction is simply a subjective error – rather the contradiction arises necessarily, even when reasoning correctly.⁶⁸¹ The important point for Hegel is that here Kant advances further than the one-sided determinations of the understanding. Old metaphysics tried to decide which determinations apply to an object, and Kant showed that in the case of dialectical oppositions the matter is far more complex and problematic than had been realized earlier. However, what Kant himself

678 TWA 8:126=Enz. § 48.

679 TWA 6:135=GW 11:331.

680 TWA 8:127f.=Enz. § 48.

681 TWA 8:128=Enz. § 48Z.

did not realize, according to Hegel, is that the antinomies also have a positive meaning, namely

daß alles Wirkliche entgegengesetzte Bestimmungen in sich enthält und daß somit das Erkennen und näher das Begreifen eines Gegenstandes eben nur soviel heißt, sich dessen als einer konkreten Einheit entgegengesetzter Bestimmungen bewußt zu werden.⁶⁸²

However, both Hegel and Kant use the insight into the antinomical structure of everything (for Kant: reason) as a justification for an idealist philosophy. Hegel's absolute idealism essentially involves the claim that any determination of the understanding, i.e. any determination of something which implies the negation of its opposite, is an ideal (abstract) determination. For instance, when viewing freedom over against necessity, arguing that the human being is ruled by either principle to the exclusion of the other, one is caught within abstractions, and one will easily suffer the fate of negative dialectics, where one ends up saying that it is impossible to decide on the matter, that human reason is too limited to fully cognize what is at hand. In a certain sense the notion of thing in itself is represented in Hegel by the concept of essence. For Hegel, however, essence and appearance stand in a dialectical relationship that does not allow for any judgment that understands any determination as more real than another. This means that essences are known only as far as they are related to appearance. This is to a certain extent a heritage from transcendental philosophy that has been incorporated into Hegel's philosophy. Hegel, however, can be seen as radicalizing the critical project in that ideas such as a supersensible substrate, or the thing in itself, no longer have relevance for philosophical knowledge, in particular when it comes to the self-investigation of reason.

As a final note I should add that I have been concerned in this study both with the historical aspects of Hegel's conception of the determinate negation as well as the role it has within Hegel's logic, in particular with a view to the dialectical method. This means that I have not had much to say about the determinate negation in relation to his *Realphilosophie*. I have also said very little about the actual points of transition where the determinate negation comes into play in *PhG*. This, therefore, remains an unfulfilled task and a natural continuation of what I have presented here.

682 TWA 8:128=Enz. § 48Z.

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